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# CONTENTS.

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THE

# DUBLIN MAGAZINE

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*Three Poems by F. R. Higgins :*

## O, You among Women

When pails empty the last brightness
Of the well, at twilight-time,
And you are there among women—
O, mouth of silence,
Will you come with me, when I sign,
To the far green wood, that fences
A lake inlaid with light ?

To be there, O, lost in each other,
While day melts in airy water,
And the drake-headed pike—a shade
In the waves' pale stir !
For love is there, under the breath,
As a coy star is there in the quiet
Of the wood's blue eye.

## Grace before Beer

For what this house affords us,
Come, praise the brewer most—
Who caught into a bottle
The barley's gentle ghost—
Until our parching throttles
In silence we employ,
Like geese that drink a mouthful,
Then stretch their necks in joy !

# Cradle Song

Out in the dark something complains,
Is it the wild dove's purr?
And something knocks, as if the rain
Comes softly to our door;
Then sleep, sleep, my darling,—
Sleep until the bow-legged crows
Walk the fields of barley.

May nothing nose the gentle birds,
Abroad in the crawl of night,
Nor the cock, with wings upon his spurs,
Until the peep of light;
Then sleep to my long rocking;
Sleep as the little winds that sleep
All safely in God's pocket—
        Yes, safely in God's pocket,
        Sleep, my darling.

*Two Poems by J. Lyle Donaghy:*

## We Will go Back if May be for a Little While

We will go back if may be for a little while
  because the waters of being hear " return ";
  because the heart and the soul are hungry for a food they knew,
  and more than ashes are inclosed in the urn.

Somewhere about the great green raths our place is
  where the plaited graceful orchids haunt
    with cream-pink flowers like wownden torcs
    Or Danaan horns that sound, insolvently, completed music.

The orchids host in the half-grazed grass on the rath,
  like the music-sustained flesh of the beautiful dead,
  never leaving the summit of the land-heap,
  and no man knows their planting.

Darling, we will return there, at least for a little while,
  if may be, once again, to take the note of beauty where it bides
  although it should be but of the beauty of death.

For we, too, sicken, at length, in this city,
  where no gold more is made to the wearer's body,
  but poor love stints his purple progresses,
  and, barely, death has dignity.

# Truce

Till to-day that wind is wanting
the wild and sown had struggled in close grips
betwixt the mountains and the sea.
Autumn and Winter they'd taken step for step,
rebutted stratagem with stratagem ;
by Spring the margin of their strife had heaved around the low slopes of the hills,
and Summer found them in a stranglehold.

But, now, hay harvest's over, and the fields all water-green ;
year-weary the ploughman forbears to requisition more ground,
or tend his sown,
simply awaiting yield—
not till the new stubble is difficult under the foot, the share
may take, in the glebe, its steadier cormorant passage,
and arrive glittering.

Peace is about the foothills ; thereabout the fluctuant marches rest,
and, there, ubiquitous gorse, the champion of the wild, allays
with rank that eye he almost closes ;
at his back the reds of heather and moss show tawnier ;
tuber nor straw moves further.

Peace has happened between the wild and sown—

Wind wakes : a seed is blown—

O, heart, needs the emblem resurge, still, unconditionally ?
(The heart, militant, accepts).

# Marcel Proust.*

*Eight letters, a single meeting*

By NATALIE CLIFFORD BARNEY.

"Whatever has become of you, Miss Barney? I haven't seen you for ages. Marcel Proust has been speaking to me about you. He is full of curiosity on your account and would like to know you. We ought to manage something, but he is so ill."

Paul Morand, whose talk seems to be made of the platitudes which he either excludes or erases from his books, chatted thus to me about his friend Proust at a charity ball. As this beginning did not promise any particular entertainment, I turned the conversation on to a mutual friend, a woman I had recognised as one of the characters in his book, *Tendres Stocks*.

"Judge me only by my poems," he implored. Then, as he started to dance with the actress, Cécile Sorel, plumaged like a Bird of Paradise, he sent me a mocking grin inspired by his partner across her unseeing shoulder, which was intended no doubt to regain prestige in my eyes. This gesture was curiously related to something I heard had been said by André Gide: "Miss Barney is among the few people one ought to see—if one had time."

Following Morand's advice, I looked through his poems and I discovered his Proust. Then my *Pensées d'une Amazone* went to join Proust by his sick-bed.

LETTER I.

Mademoiselle,

I have only just seen your book, because I am recovering from an illness which is very like death, and no doubt a preparation for it, and which hardly allows me, any more than would death itself, to-day that I am a kind of convalescent dead man, a ghost who opens his eyes and rises for about three hours every fortnight, to write and thank you. Still, I want to tell you as a whole, reserving the details till a better day, that your book is delightful and profound† and makes me ashamed of my own. Alas! nothing

*This forms a chapter of the author's book, *Aventures de l'Esprit* (Paris, Emile-Paul Frères. 1930). The translation is made with the permission of author and publishers.

†The word "profound" is written in above the line—a very obvious afterthought. (*Author's note*).

less than *Sodome et Gomorrhe,* if I ever have the strength to correct the proofs, will be a refrain alternating with your gentle song. The divine peace of the Eclogues and the Banquet, the freedom of Lucian, will not reign in it, but rather the black despair of two lines of Vigny which I chose as a motto for it about five years ago and which I notice that you quote too. How much I would like, and that also in a better day, to talk over all these things with you. Meanwhile, I read you, and I beg you to believe me very respectfully yours,—

MARCEL PROUST.

LETTER II.

Mademoiselle,

Your charming letter is a temptation and a sorrow. I have a temperature of 105. Shall I never know you? Or shall I not rather manage, as I hope, to break through these fatalities which, as they keep me away from all, have to my grief kept me away from you. If I do not send you *Le Côté de Guermantes* which is published to-day (if I am to believe my publishers, but it is wise never to believe them), the reason is that I have still hopes of finding you an "original edition," a disastrous invention which suppresses the first editions and reserves the thirds for the author. Now I cannot flatter myself that a third edition, even with an inscription full of your praises, that is to say, sincere, would have the same value for you as an original edition. I have a yearning curiosity about the little Temple of Love,* and I am yours with respect and admiration,—

MARCEL PROUST.

"The taste of the public has become very severe. In publishing, as I shall do before long, *Sodome et Gomorrhe,* I renounce with delight all future honours. (Although, as I believe I have already written you, the characters of my personages make my book rather less "objective" than I could have wished). Now, I have just been reading again those sublime *Epaves* by Baudelaire, which are really a section of *Les Fleurs du Mal.* How much more daring it is than all that is thought daring! Forgive this rambling letter. I am rather astonished that with so much fever I have been able to write it at all. It is the first in eight days."

*A part of Miss Barney's house in Paris, dating from the seventeenth century, has this name. (*Translator's note*).

LETTER III.

Mademoiselle,

I am going to write you a long letter. The fever has left me and I have come back to my usual malady. But I should not like to add to it a renewal of the one I have just had. So I dread the rather chilly Temple.

> Quand Octobre souffle, émondeur des vieux arbres,
> Son vent melancolique à l'entour de ses marbres.

If not, will you allow me the day I get up to send word about 7 o'clock to ask if I may come about half-past-eleven. Infinite thanks for the offer of the car, but I have an old taxi which I have got used to. It is so small that I can keep warm in it. As far as that goes, there is no difficulty. But imagine that I had absolutely promised to go to see some friends to-day and had expressly rested up to do it. And here I am not able to get out of bed. As my desire is to see *you*, and in a way as little "Society" and as much "anti-society" as possible, perhaps it would suit you if I were to arrive at the hour which would best suit me—about the time you get home. Let us say midnight. I believe that I shall get up to-morrow, or more likely Friday or Saturday. But don't you think that some inesthetic place which is well heated would be better, and we can keep the Temple in reserve till summer. Fancy that it suddenly occurs to me that I saw you once. (But chronology seems to make that impossible). At the Comédie Francaise, at a special Matinée, I went into a box to say how-do-you-do to Mme. Adolphe de Rothschild, who had Lady de Grey with her, some Manchester or other, and a girl whose wonderful fair skin made me so shy that I immediately returned to my seat in the orchestra. But, alas! it seems to me impossible that it was you on account of the dates.—Yours very respectfully

MARCEL PROUST.

* * * *

We arranged a meeting. But those who want to meet are often frustrated.

### Letter IV.

Mademoiselle,

I have caught cold again. Therefore I am unable to arrange anything—at least anything precise and immediate. As for the box at the theatre I must have left out some words and failed to make my meaning clear. For all that dates back to a time when you could have been only twelve years old (if you were born).

A thing comic or moving, as you like :—I have found one of my books which belongs to that time, and in it are some verses about a little temple devoted to Friendship. The verses are very bad, but I like to see in them the sign of a predestination. That is a fine saying of yours : " First of all for the last time." Am I like you ? No ; I don't agree with Vigny's advice : " Love what you shall never see twice." I only like what I can always see again. But each day I feel that I am existing for the last time. I should very much like to know you before I die.

Yours respectfully,

Marcel Proust.

### Letter V.

Mademoiselle,

As I never think of myself, I don't care about being seen, but rather to see. I have, therefore, a very strong desire to meet you, even if you should find me unpleasant, for on my side I am certain to find you delightful. I call " anti-society " a meeting where we shall be alone by ourselves, or at least without any kind of fashionable people. Afterwards, when we get to know each other better, we can decide between ourselves whom we judge worthy of our mutual understanding. All that is rather delayed because I have poisoned myself—not from a wish to die, for I am fond of this horrible life to which I cling only by a thread, but through fury at not been able to sleep ; and this drove me to take at one go a whole box of Veronal tablets, and Dial and Opium on top of that. I did not sleep, but I suffered horribly. And I have now before my eyes some appalling promises I have made to people who loaded me with attentions. After all that, I will go to see you (if you will have me) ; but I am not quite sure when. Here in my place it is impossible. The Ritz hotel is

boiling, and I love that. Its rooms are the ugliest on earth (after my own apartment), but that's all one to me. When I was twenty, I perceived that dwellings, whether ugly or beautiful, seemed to me the same—except the masterpieces of architecture where no one lives; just as between fashionable people who are clever and fashionable people who are stupid there is hardly any difference—though perhaps a slight superiority should be granted to the second class as it is more restful than the one which fancies itself intellectual. Only, what makes the Ritz—so healthy for me—atrocious, are the gentlemen and ladies who dine there. The hideously comic rococo ceiling does not disturb my dreams or threaten my head (since the Berthas and Gothas have ended, or been interrupted); but this gentleman or that——

* * * * *

The end of this letter is missing. As I always try to keep everything, I hardly ever keep the essential.

Taking advantage of this truce, a new meeting was arranged to take place at my house in the Rue Jacob about midnight.

My house was then heated with wood fires, and it was with difficulty brought to the 72 degrees (Fahrenheit) which my visitor had demanded. This temperature, to which he was used, did not succeed in melting his mental habits, nor aid me to infringe on them. Closed in on all sides within the prison of his partialities, he was past renewing. He had been right when he calculated that he had no more time for that.

Vainly I tried to draw him on to some territory still unexplored by us. He preferred to shelter under "the Belgian chimes of Madame de Guermantes' laugh," and other pleasantries of a fashionable turn which he must have told often with great success.

It was a matter of amusing me rather than of discovering me. I was sorry for th s formalism on both our accounts. As the time passed he ventured to experiment other remarks on me. And the night became the slate upon which he traced the observations of his epic of high society. It would have been easier to interrupt a professor's lecture at the Sorbonne; all was planned in advance; it was impossible to put anything into it. His usual poisons stimulated him sufficiently.

Garbed in an ermine chasuble which served me as a dressing

gown (I had tried to get some sleep while I was waiting for him), I seemed to be religiously presiding at an Office of trifles, while I watched his face, fixed like a mask against the wall, refusing to the mirrors its tired and flabby look, with the eyes ringed by the vampires of solitude. The moustache of a romantic black. His voice—but his voice escapes me. That toneless voice heard in dreams is what comes instead. Still, his voice rather than what he said should have revealed to me this being, rigid by reason of self-vigilance. The gleam of his shirt-front, his dress-coat, gave him the official attitude of a dead man in his coffin. Without seeming to see me, he looked at me. Ghastly and compendious, did he force everything down into his laboratory of decomposition? He did not operate under one's eyes. I had the impression that no one had ever had with him a moment of real intercourse created by the immediate transfusion of thought. I had rightly foreseen that our first meeting would be the end of the intimacy which had its source in imagination.

We struggled along feebly. I invited him with some friends, feeling to what extent we were without resources between ourselves. I tried to find for him other associations. But he avoided authors, and concealed his dislike for them by seeing them as little as possible. He sent me this letter written by another hand.

LETTER VI.

Dear Mademoiselle Clifford,

Forgive me for not being well enough to-day to write to you myself. Forgive me, above all, for not being able to accept the dazzling invitation. Your letter was almost entirely unreadable. Did you mean it so? And if you did, was it to hide roses or thorns? The second supposition would be very cruel, for there is nobody to whom I have made so many gracious advances (gracious advances are very feeble words) as I have to you for the last six months. I think I made out the name of Mme. Delarue-Mardrus in your letter. If she is to be present on the day you have allowed me to come and see you, my regret is still greater, for there is no great poet that I admire more than her—the Muse of Brocéliande. I have not the impression that when

you write to me you realize that you are writing to a dead man. However, the dead man is perhaps going to get up for a little while; but he has not left his bed for a month. Please believe me respectfully yours,—

MARCEL PROUST.

## LETTER VII.

Mademoiselle,

I will explain to you what has happened. I went out last evening to say farewell to my friend Reynaldo*—and just think that at midnight I decided to ring. I was handed several letters, and the dear express-letter which distresses me very much.

"L'histoire des bonheurs que je n'aurais pas eus."

I should be very glad to see you with those two ladies, and meanwhile, would you like me to repeat some evening when I am not too ill the solitary and nocturnal visit? What a still-born "nativity" your letter has brought me! Yours respectfully,—

MARCEL PROUST.

## LETTER VIII.

Dear Mademoiselle Clifford,

You have overwhelmed me with attentions of all kinds. Alas! I can't enjoy the flowers, for I have a malady (to add to the others) which has several names, and too few (!) seeing the numerous causes which provoke it—hay fever, rose fever, etc. Alas, too, while I hoped till the last minute yesterday to be able to get up, it was not possible. Consequently I missed seeing you (and so many charming people that you mention), and I was not able to see and hear Mme. Delarue-Mardrus. I understand your (her?) admiration for Poe (which has doubled my admiration for her); even his books of simple adventure such as "Arthur Gordon Pym" remain in the desolation of my life as one of the benedictions of memory. You say with much truth that you too on your side have proffered civilities to me. Believe me, I have all the gratitude which that calls for. But not to depreciate

*Reynaldo Hahn, the composer. (*Translator's note*).

too much my civilities relative to yours, I will say that the civility of a young woman who receives company, who lives a social life easily, who writes without fatigue, is quite another thing compared to that of one who once a year replies to a friend he hasn't seen for twenty years; pays for the fatigue that letter costs with long hours of fever; does not get up more than once a month and then at extraordinary hours; and who no longer has eyes or hands or brain. And it will be only when you add to my mediocre civility this coefficient of rareness and pain that you will find it is not unequal to your own.

Please accept, dear Mademoiselle Clifford, my respectful and grateful thanks.—

MARCEL PROUST.

* * * * *

At that point we remained: he, crystallised in his labour, and I aware of his crystallisation. He had his work to finish. Nothing unforeseen could interest him. With all his notes to elucidate, he had very little time to finish what he had undertaken.

And when I heard of his death I completely understood how wise was the plan of limits he had set for himself.

Upon his death I expected some final pronouncements. *La Nouvelle Revue Francaise* prepared a memorial number. The testimonies to Marcel Proust showed that nobody buries a writer better than a fellow writer. Some of the recollections of his friends which I read in it gave a very mean notion of friendship. I fell back on Morand, who, with vague and digestive eye roving elsewhere, could find nothing better to say to me than a phrase of lapidary insignificance: "He is a great loss." This careless and official scattering of his ashes by those who knew him best emboldens me to speak of him in my turn.

Knowing him less well, without familiarity—that halo of mist which blurs the features—I have kept a view of him too spontaneous to be mistaken. Certain people have said of Proust that he described "life slowed down." His observations seem to me rather those of a short-sighted person who only sees details clearly, but details which nobody else has seen. Walter Scott and Balzac had evidently a less complicated minuteness because

they had no personal part in what they described. There was bound to follow a nervous reaction of life thoroughly assimilated, self-concentrated. It is therefore less a slackened down objective film than a consumption of every moment. Thanks to this patient fever, and to this short-sight become a virtue, the innumerable has become numerable. The pigment of Proust's brain colours all things with its own colour. As a crystal buried in earth to compensate for the daylight it is deprived of contracts an icy clearness instead, so Proust seems to put forth from his brain with the iridescence taken there all that his brain had absorbed. Far from being instantly rejected, everything that has entered his brain undergoes a complete process of elaboration and takes the hues of his own chemistry. And with the malady of misers he must be always adding to what he has appropriated. All he takes he enriches out of himself. And so it is less actual life he presents, than his own sensitiveness, wrought upon by circumstances which are only its varying nourishment. But he feeds less on this substance than he injects into it his poisons. To write in that way seems to me a manner of being ill, and illness has its personality as much as the being itself. Poisons are more clarifying than passions, and by compounding his poisons in accord with ours, he communicates to us certain social intoxications which seem to have developed in ourselves. Those who read him with fervour like to be confessed, but not to be cured.

Our acts are often but the expression of our intimate devils. Far from wishing to drive them out, Proust identifies himself with them, encourages them, and takes care not to exorcise them. For there is reason to fear that one is distinctive only by them and by the vices which emanate from them. The virtues are so much alike that it has been possible to reduce them to ten negative commandments.

# I. Petals of a Rose

The yellow funnels faded into the raw October mist.

In the harsh grey pall overhanging the widening arm of the Thames estuary the last vestige of the 12,000 ton liner disappeared—melted slowly away. Greedily, cruelly, it seemed to him, bit by bit, the whole vast hull was swallowed up.

Only with an effort, with an ache of reluctance, could he move his eyes from the spot. They were full of tears. In his hand he still held the grey silk handkerchief which he had continued to wave mechanically long after it must have been completely lost to vision from the great ship's side.

With a start, he suddenly realised his surroundings: looking round, saw for the first time, with some surprise, where he was.

A scrubby, grey-green spit of land, with dirty, spumy water lapping at the edges. At his feet a battered, rusty kettle with holes in it, the bottom burnt through; near by, a broken bottle, a rain-sodden scrap of coloured paper, half a tram ticket, nettles. The earth, where it showed through the coarse, ill-nourished grass, everywhere grimy, as if mingled with soot, perpetually poisoned with filth from the atmosphere.

His passage here had been so hurried, so frantic, that he had noticed nothing, observed no detail of the route by which he had come.

For one consuming passion alone had seized him, absorbed him, urged him on—to follow the boat.

And this he had done with remarkable success. At first, on leaving the quay, deserting the long embarkation "special" of seemingly new first-class coaches, which had brought them all down and was even now waiting to take back those who were not making the voyage, there had been others with him: adventurous spirits with friends on board, animated by a like desire. But gradually, as obstacle succeeded obstacle—walls to be scrambled over; wharfside yards to be crossed boldly, in face of warning notices to trespassers; at one point the wide basin of a water-filled dock to be navigated, with a tip to a chance boatman—all, one after another, had dropped behind, giving up the hopeless chase.

Alone, he had hung relentlessly on, nerved, maddened, by the heartache of his misery.

At last he could go no further, found himself at a point from which he looked out over the whole estuary, to that dim horizon of haze where, as it seemed to him, the river lost itself in the first mists of the open sea.

Only then had his flight, reckless, fevered in its determination, been stayed, his impulse received a sobering check.

Now, with one lingering look seawards again, as if vainly struggling once more to pierce the veil of mist, he turned, making his way slowly from the water's edge.

By climbing over a gate he found himself in a dingy lane. Hedge and bank on either side presented a forlorn, draggled aspect, their every effort to achieve some grace and dignity, some rural charm, thwarted, frustrated, foredoomed to failure by the blighting proximity of the great city. A couple of sharp bends followed by a stretch of leisurely winding road brought him out, somewhat unexpectedly, in front of a largish railway station.

He went inside and found that a slow train back to the London terminus was just leaving. The name, he noticed, was quite unfamiliar to him—Grays. It was some relief to feel that he would not have long to wait about. He took his ticket and climbed into the first third-class carriage he saw.

It was a "smoker," and was more than half full. The fact that most of his fellow-travellers appeared to be labourers returning home from their day's work brought to his dulled senses, for the first time, the realisation that it must by now be late afternoon. It was an old pattern of carriage with hard, threadbare seats, and the floor was inconceivably filthy with burnt matches, cigarette ends, tobacco ash knocked out of pipes, and small dark patches, apparently of half-dried expectoration.

From the moment the train was in motion he stared continuously out of the window, seeing nothing of what his eyes fell upon. Even the frequent stops and the fact that the compartment became uncomfortably crowded he hardly noticed. His sordid surroundings awoke no feeling of disgust, while the gathering gloom blended all too surely, with tragic harmony, into his mental mood.

All the while his tired eyes saw but one picture. The huge stark hull of the liner, and high up, at the rail, her figure, one hand holding aloft a fluttering handkerchief.

With harrowing persistence his mind kept turning over and over every incident of the morning of departure. The breakfast, rather late, tactfully left to themselves by their friends, the young married couple with whom they had been staying during this last desolating week; the locking-up and labelling, with those special, various, multi-coloured labels, issued by the shipping company, of the larger trunks; the final packing of the two small dressing-cases and the much-travelled brown handbag. A breathing space—it seemed no more—alone together in the drawing-room, during which, with ever more agonised feelings, he found it almost impossible to keep his eyes off the relentlessly creeping hands of the clock. Then lunch, at which their hostess had tried with noble effort, quietly and unobtrusively, to be natural, matter-of-fact, to lighten the gloom; the taxi at the door, the luggage loaded up, the drive across London in the pitiless rain. And the journey, all too quickly over, from St. Pancras to Tilbury, in the luxury of the boat train, among a crowd of excited, manifestly happy, laughing fellow-passengers.

On arrival he had gone on board with the rest, to have a look at her cabin and see her comfortably settled in for the long voyage. A lovely bunch of sweetly fragrant amber tea roses with long stalks, all in the first freshness of opening from bud, he had managed to get the stewardess, despite the bustle and commotion all round and the press of many duties, immediately to put in water for her. They had arrived, quite unexpectedly, late the evening before, bringing with them a charming message of affection and *bon voyage* from his most intimate man friend, with whom the two of them had had tea in the city that afternoon. The thought, the graceful manner of the gift, had delighted her, brought her comfort, making her eyes shine and her cheek flush with pleasure. "Isn't he a dear!" she had murmured impulsively, caressing the unfolding petals, soft and velvety, with her finger tips.

Just as they had started out to make an inspection of the lounge and other public rooms they had been met at the door by a small black cat, tail erect and very friendly. The little animal's contented purr was the one note of cheeriness his recollection

brought him. A good omen, which they had eagerly, laughingly, accepted and responded to, their hearts for a moment gladdened and filled with joy.

A loudly clanging bell brought them hurrying on deck for the few final words, the tragic brave play of lips and eyes at actual parting : gangways were quickly drawn on board, and with a long, piercing hoot of siren reverberating mournfully through the air, the water in the dock began to churn up and the distance between the dark, towering wall with its long rows of already lighted port-holes and the grey stone side of the quay steadily increased.

With a jolt he realised the train was at its journey's end.

Once outside the shelter of the station he found the rain was again falling in a steady down-pour.

Hurriedly he made his way on foot to the G. P. O., darting in and out along the glimmering pavements with their thin coating of well-churned liquid mud. He must send a wire to Southampton, where the boat would touch that evening.

On returning to the street he realised that in his preoccupation he had forgotten his umbrella, leaving it hanging on the shelf where he had written out the telegram before taking it across to the counter for despatch. He went back to look for it, but it had already vanished. There were a number of people in the hall, and he knew, while gazing dejectedly about him, that it was almost useless to try and trace it.

By Underground he reached eventually Gloucester Road Station and walked quickly to the block of flats where his friends lived. With infinite weariness he climbed the stairs to the top and rang the bell.

On the hall table, to his intense surprise, he found a letter in the familiar hand-writing.

While he was examining it, puzzled, his hostess came out of the drawing-room and asked him if he had had any dinner. Her face was grave, her voice kindly, sympathetic. He said, no, but that he really felt too tired to take anything, and though she tried to persuade him, he persisted in his refusal. With a smile he begged to be excused, saying he felt himself such poor company for anyone, he'd rather go straight to his room.

As soon as the door closed behind him he sat down heavily in an arm-chair, throwing himself back and shooting his legs out in front of him at full length. For a moment he closed his eyes and passed his fingers slowly once or twice over his forehead.

Then he looked again in a dazed sort of way at the letter, which he found he was still holding in his left hand. He turned it over. Tightly stuck up, so that the flap looked all of a piece with the whole envelope. No mark of any kind on the back. He felt it between his fingers. Not very fat : an ordinary double sheet, at most, inside.

He turned it again and began examining with closer attention the front cover. Posted that morning—11.45 a.m., and quite close by—W.8. Grey Silurian paper, as used by these particular friends of his and as placed in the little stand in the room she had been occupying. He had noticed it when doing up her boxes and helping with the labels. Addressed to him quite firmly, in her own pretty hand-writing, clear and full of character.

Funny thing : what could she want to say to him in a letter which he would only receive after she had gone ?

His eyes wandered away from the envelope. Dreamily, he began going over various moments in their friendship, in their love. For it had really been love—deep, moving, surprising love—from the very first.

He had been living in Edinburgh for eighteen months and was just leaving the north for good. A cousin of his, a girl medical student married to a young doctor lately qualified, had been anxious that he should meet a friend of hers. He refused, saying he had no wish to make any new friends on the eve of going away.

The next day, however, his cousin, a wild impetuous Irish girl, called at his diggings to say she had arranged for her friend to have tea with her that day and he must come along too. The matter was taken out of his hands.

From the first moment it was clear to him what the outcome of it must be. And she realised it too.

The next night she was at a dance in the McEwan Hall. About 1.0 a.m.—it was a warm clear summer night, brightly star-lit—he had walked across the Meadows, past the Infirmary, and stood for some time in the shadow of a doorway on the opposite

side, looking up at the lighted windows, listening, happily, if a little enviously, to the music.

He remembered one or two excursions they had made together in the first wonderful thrill of their new-found happiness. One from Leith, in a little crowded steamer, round the Bass Rock with its vast ever-restless colony of sea-birds, gannets wheeling up and over and down, the wind eerily full of their mournful cry, alighting, scrambling, tumbling over one another, on the face of the cliff. And one to Loch Lomond, when suddenly one of those black squalls had blown down on them from the mountains round, turning the lake water to a miniature sea of angry, choppy, white-capped wavelets slapping against the boat side and making their weather-wise oarsman pull, with unconcealed anxiety, for shelter.

And then, almost immediately, the blow had come which within a few weeks was to necessitate her return to New Zealand for at least two long years. A doctor had discovered that she showed unmistakable signs of incipient tubercle of the lungs. At present only a tiny patch, at the left apex. But quite recognisable, definite and characteristic.

Normally very healthy, used as a girl to a vigorous open-air life, she had been doing too much—trying, as the saying is, to burn the candle at both ends. Besides attending lectures in the mornings and reading fairly steadily at Medicine, she had entered eagerly, blessed with a wonderful capacity for enjoyment, into all the divers activities of University life. Golf, tennis, swimming—this, a passion with her, all the year round : the sea, in summer, in winter, the closed indoor baths. In time of frost, skating. In the evenings, theatres, concerts, debates and meetings, dances, supper parties. On occasion, dancing till 3.0 or 4.0 in the morning ; out again at 6.0, bathing at Portobello, it might be, or scrambling—one of a laughing, madcap crowd, breathless, hair wind-blown—to the top of Arthur's Seat ; in snow, tobogganning on Blackford Hill ; at a lecture at 9.0.

As soon as ever he received this grave news he had taken her, accompanied by a girl friend, to see a specialist in London. It was in Wimpole Street. The distinguished physician—a world-renowned figure on the staff of Bart.'s—to whom they had a personal introduction, was most considerate, infinitely painstaking in the thoroughness of his examination.

To the one who has to wait on these occasions, the adjoining

room quickly becomes a torture chamber. When his last reserve of fortitude had almost ebbed away the great man appeared at the door, kindly grave behind gold-rimmed glasses. His exhaustive investigation had entirely confirmed the previous report. She must spend at least two winters in a more equable climate—her native New Zealand would do admirably. In that event, with absolute rest, plenty of good food, regularity of hours, there was no reason why the further advance of the process should not be arrested. With care, the "focus," at present a spot "no bigger than an almond," could be strictly localised, circumscribed, ultimately be converted into a nodule of fibrous tissue. No,—to a question somewhat haltingly put—emphatically, it would not be right for her to marry within two years.

That was what the grave measured tones had said to him, in words chosen, obviously, with great deliberation, solemnly weighing each phrase, as the occasion merited.

Suddenly now, holding this letter in his hand, an appalling, devastating doubt rushed into his mind. Could it be that out of kindness of heart, out of a shrinking reluctance to cause unnecessary pain—doctors, he knew, did this sort of thing on occasion—*he had not been told the whole truth?* . . .

Like malevolent lightning the thought struck his overwrought and wearied intelligence, nerve-racked with sorrow: struck with baleful force and effect, quickly over-toppling judgment, reasoning power, all the delicacy of its poise and balance.

Yes! . . . and so far from the case being easily curable, already, it might be, the terrible scourge had laid its cruel grip on her with all the strength of its remorseless tenacity: so that . . . perhaps even before the two years were over . . . A strangling, choking sensation clutched his throat. . . . And she, with her quick intelligence, realising all, had bravely determined to keep the secret from him until after her departure!

A letter of farewell!

The more he considered the matter the more the disordered mechanism of his mind accepted this theory as the obvious solution: accepted it, adding immediately, unerringly, from the store-house of his memory, a hundred-and-one small signs and indications to fit in with it, to confirm it, subtly to persuade him of its truth.

A letter of farewell! A letter of farewell! The horrible

music of the words haunted him, tortured him, staring starkly at him, dominating the last salient of his reason. . . .

The envelope slipped from his grasp. His eyes closed. . . .

After a long time, stiff and cold, he stumbled up out of his chair, picking the letter from the carpet as he rose. He walked across to the bedside and placed it, still unopened, under the pillow. Entirely convinced of the fatal message it contained, he was calmer now, numbed and reconciled to this brutal climax to his day of suffering. He would read it in the morning.

But sleep did not come to him.

At last, fevered, restless, his will power once more sapped and broken, he switched the light on again. Two o'clock! Exactly twelve hours since she left the door of the flat—the beginning of the end!

As if nerved by a sudden impulse, he thrust his hand under the pillow and drew out the letter. Again he paused for a second, staring blankly at it: then, with a fearful effort, tore open the envelope and pulled out the single sheet it contained.

Three rose petals fluttered down on to the coverlet. There were only a few lines of writing:

10.10 a.m. Friday, Oct. 1st.

Dearest,

I love you with *all* my heart—be comforted. I shall come back to you, strong and well: have no fear.

Your lover, your little girl lover,

L.

The petals are kisses.

The paper was stained a little at one point with moisture pressed out of the rose petals, still fragrant, still smooth and soft, but now turning to russet at the edges; and the initial letter "L." was smudged, as if with tears.

Exhausted, dead-beat, he fell into a profound sleep.

# II. Survival?

*Red lips, red leaping blood, light laughter,*
*All the brief pageant of bright birth :*
*O eyes, and hair, and hands !—and after—*
*Is there no lover but the quiet earth ?*

Do the dead live again after death ?—live again, may be, in some subtle association with objects, which, in our fumbling half-knowledge, we have chosen to call inanimate ? Those objects, more particularly, which were in close and constant contact, in sympathetic unison, with them during bodily life ?

I do not know.

Is death, bodily death, the real end ? I mean, like a flame that flares up, burns itself out and is gone—irrevocable : complete : through all eternity, final ? Is that it ? . . .

To-day, some of us are groping—clumsily, it may be, often enough—for truth : . . . looking round . . . looking round, if you will, like the heathen, for signs and portents and wonders.

Well, then, . . . *can* something survive the death of the body ?—pass beyond that little prison-house, yet hover near . . . animating, vitalising, . . . taking shape, even, linked up with some one or other of the ideas, the thoughts, that were often in the minds of the living—dear to them, cherished by them ? Linked up, living again, in a domain, on a plane, with which mortal flesh has no concern ?

I do not know : I do not know.

But I will tell you a curious story.

She was a mother, and she was young—32. She died suddenly, in six days, in the great influenza epidemic of some years ago.

She had come from a far country—half across the world—for the fulfilment of all that a woman yearns for. And the gods had been good : given joy in full measure—love, marriage, children.

Oh, and she had vitality! One of her girl friends wrote, when the grievous news came to her:

> " . . . She always seemed so vitally alive and so full of enjoyment of the world and people—and that she should leave it all just as spring is coming.
>
> " I suppose the war has taught us that Life is not measured by years—and she has had some great experience. It must be very wonderful to be the mother of three sons—and she so revelled in motherhood. And age and decay have never even approached her—she will never be anything but young and fresh—so that her life looked at as a whole is beautiful. The sorrow is for those who remain . . . I am truly sorry for them. . . . "

" She will never be anything but young and fresh." . . . One day, years earlier, in a laughing moment, her deep-set dark eyes lighting with a queer, half humourous, half serious ardour, she had said quite suddenly—as if she meant it—that she hoped she would die young. The remark startled those who heard it, but they saw that it was not meant to startle, that it was no idle caprice, no empty vanity flung off without careful regard for all that the words implied. Rather was it as if some deep chord in her had, of its own will, given the phrase utterance: some deep chord splendidly attune to all the sensitive wonder of that vitality, . . . which dreaded the jarring touch inevitable in the threat of " age and decay." . . . She had her wish.

Her life was beautiful. " Looked at as a whole "—the fine perfection, the subtle craftsmanship of a cameo. Through all its stages—girlhood, womanhood, motherhood—with a growing, developing, cumulative quality, radiant and rare. The beauty of the blossom—breaking from bud, unfolding, retaining fadeless—for all time!—the full glamour of its ultimate achievement.

At the time of her marriage, one, more out-spoken than most, with a simplicity of speech, a directness, engaging in its sincerity, as one used to admiring, giving thanks for, the bounty of Nature (she was a countrywoman), had said—in her presence, " She'll make fine boys! " It had embarrassed her not at all: she laughed delightedly, charmingly—genuinely appreciative of the high compliment paid her.

As became a mother, she was an exquisite—and assiduous—needlewoman. It mattered not what it might be—curtains for

casement windows; covers in cretonne or in flowered chintz for chair or sofa; table linen, bed linen; silks and stuffs for her own wear; woolies, "crawlers," overalls, first little *piqué* two-piece suits—shirt with pocket and very short "shorts," later—more substantial wide-legged pairs in saxe-blue serge, for her three bonny boys: any or all she would tackle, as the need arose, with equal resolution and zest and skill.

The chintzes and cretonnes would be gay and bright, always with roses in the pattern. Silk, *ninon, crêpe-de-chine,* for more intimate personal use—all would bear the same emblem, the rose. If she crocheted a lace collar for wear on an evening frock, it would be a design in sprays of rose: a tiny, beautifully formed, fully opened floweret here; a couple of close, tight buds near by; another, further along, with petals just unfolding. Fiddling sort of work, trying to the eyes: yet she would sit up half the night, blissfully happy carrying out with deft fingers and marvellous precision the minutest details of her conception.

One who saw much of her work, a very dear friend, an older woman, shrewd and practical, said—more than once, "It's a real shame, with such a gift, not to utilise it more widely. If she went into business, she'd make a thousand a year—easily."

When the first baby came eight little white frocks were made—"one for every day of the week and two for Sunday"; amazingly fine work, delicate as gossamer, each one slightly differing from its fellow, yet all alike in this—each design based on the same inspiring *motif,* running through the series: leaf, bud, blossom, of the rose.

Curious, this, how again and again from a hundred different facets of her life, varying widely in time and place and circumstance, the same—spark, shall I call it—was struck: this eager, adoring homage to the rose. Urgent, impulsive, almost as if it were purposeful—a flash, flint-quick, sharply, on a sudden, illuminating for her the way she was travelling—we all are travelling—the Valley of the Shadow.

When she came to Europe on that first far sea-voyage, the boat put in for a day at Naples. Immediately she went ashore with a few friends. What a joy she had exploring the city!—getting off the beaten track as quickly as possible; undeterred by dirt and squalor, puzzling her own way fearlessly through the less frequented by-ways. Rummaging in a bric-a-brac shop she

chanced on a piece of cut coral that fascinated her: pink, in places faintly veined with white, most delicately carved to represent three tiny roses, one larger and more fully open than the other two—petal enfolding petal, from the firm tight heart of the rose, just parting in a pretty pout, to the single loose outermost petal, curling, dimpled and showing the first crumplings as if about to fall. The three pieces were fashioned into a pendant, linked together on a fine gold chain. Whenever she wore it, which she often did, people were drawn to it, remarked on it. "Most unusual," they would say: "wherever did you find it?" "How *do* we find things? Perhaps . . . it found me!" she would laugh oddly.

One day when travelling by train, at a railway bookstall she picked up and purchased a copy of the *English Review*—an unheard-of extravagance under ordinary circumstances, for she was never at any time well off. What attracted her? Among the titles on the front cover you may read: "A Wind-blown Rose," Frederick Niven. Years afterwards when the charming story was reprinted in a volume of short tales, she found the book at the *Times* Library, remaindered at a low figure. She bought two copies. "I may give one to a friend," she said. But they remained on her shelf to the last, the two volumes side by side—"Above your Heads," "Above your Heads."

The book she would be reading—and she loved books passionately—often lay on a black oak gate-legged table in the bay-window of her little sitting-room. To protect it from the marauding grasp of little fingers not always free from "matter in the wrong place" she would slip it into a loose cover of stamped leather-work done for her by an artist friend, drawn and coloured in accordance with her own expressed wish—a spray of briar rose.

Once when, owing to reasons of health, she had to be parted from her lover for a long period, journeying overseas again, on the morning of departure impulsively she dashed off, for him, a tiny note of hope and faith and deep affection. On the spur of the moment, as she was about to close the envelope, she slipped into it three rose-petals. "The petals are kisses," she wrote hurriedly at the bottom of the page.

All through her life, this—like a thread of gold! Like a thread of gold, gleaming on the surface here and there, at set intervals, yet always to be found not far off, in the background,

on the reverse, running through, unifying, brightening the whole texture—the multi-coloured tapestry of her life.

A year or so after her death one who loved her dearly asked the second little boy—he was three when his mother died—whether he remembered his " mummie." Sitting up in his cot, playing with his toys—he was convalescent from an illness, " 'es, I do," he said solemnly, slowly, as if pondering the matter deeply, " she was a lovely lady. She had a pink dressing-gown." *Couleur-de-rose* was not yet in his vocabulary !

When for the first time she was installed in a home of her own —it was very small—she determined, however tiny the garden might be, to plant roses in it. She seems to have dwelt long and lovingly over the scheme, planning every particular with shrewd forethought, minute attention to detail. Among her papers were found florists' catalogues, evidently hunted through diligently from cover to cover, with pencil markings and notes jotted here and there. On a half sheet torn from a letter-pad appeared a rough plan of the little garden in ink, a blob here, another there, with arrows pointing to them, indicating where the different named varieties were to be put in. She planted standards in the long border down one side by the narrow brick path to the back gate, and climbers and ramblers along the opposite fence—Hiawatha, Dorothy Perkins, Lady Gay, Excelsa, Crimson Rambler. In the front there was only a trim neatly-kept speck of lawn, but a dozen feet or so in width, between the house and the public side-walk bordering the road : yet she managed to put in here also several of the same favourite varieties, one at each side of the gate and one in each corner.

Finally she turned her attention to the face of the house itself. Her own bed-room looked out this way, being situated immediately above the little sitting-room. And here she decided to establish an American Pillar, fixing it against the brick, close up in the corner between the bay-window and the low paling adjoining the neighbouring property.

" You'll see it'll grow right up to our window," she said to her husband, her lover, busying herself delightedly in a pair of old gloves with the job of unpacking the sturdy young plant from its straw wrapping and putting it securely into the chosen spot already prepared to receive it.

Her modest ambitions in this direction satisfied, she settled

down joyously to the simple routine of her domestic duties. With a few personal belongings from girlhood days, her pictures, her sewing, the management of her little household, and love—warm, kindly, generous, understanding—to lighten the hours for her, she was happy as perhaps few are happy.

And now in addition she found herself, to her joy, surrounded by books, for her husband had been a collector, with wide and catholic tastes, for many years. Books everywhere: to add variety to the usual classics and more modern volumes of lighter character, there were whole shelves devoted to Science, Sociology, Philosophy, Religion.

Always a quick reader, appreciative, discerning, she browsed about as the mood took her, frankly delighting in the new vistas thus opened out to her. Soon she began making discoveries. For a long time past not quite at ease, completely satisfied with conventional views on religious matters, she became absorbed in the pursuit of further light in this and allied fields, exploring widely in her enthusiasm: always with a serious mind endeavouring to puzzle things out for herself without bias and without the prejudice born of preconceived ideas.

As the war progressed, letters appeared in the newspapers, personal interviews were recorded, books even were published, positively alleging "proof" that intercommunication between the living and those others who, as they phrased it, had "passed over" was definitely possible: more particularly where the bond of love or deep affection had already united those wishing to participate in such experiences. She read these with a sort of desultory interest, at first critically hostile, entirely sceptical in her attitude towards the whole business. To the fruits of emotionalism she felt it must be put down, and nothing more: the result merely of frayed nerves and the constant strain of those terrible days of desolation.

Then one day a friend managed to persuade her to attend a *séance* of some kind or other, on the plea that her strongly developed character, her marked individuality, was just what was wanted, was most likely to be useful in inducing results at an endeavour of that kind. To her husband's surprise she came back apparently more than half convinced that there *was* after all "something in it."

"Of course," she laughed, "I can quite see, the difficulty

is for us in our dulness to be quick enough, discerning enough, to grasp the message when it comes."

On three small quarto sheets she recorded every question asked and the answer received, together with other notes and observations made at the same time. It is clear that the experience moved her strangely.

Meanwhile the little garden, her other chief source of relaxation, prospered wonderfully. When at the outset she had spent so much time and trouble in trying to plan things out neighbours had been very free with kindly but damping criticism of the project. The soil, they said, was so wretchedly poor it was really no use trying to do anything with it. They had made the experiment themselves and spoke from bitter disillusion. Nevertheless she was not put off and went ahead quietly with her scheme.

Certainly she had ample reward for her patience, her persistence, her odd confidence: for she had shown in the way she spoke that she never had any doubt of the success of her endeavour. The roses made a wonderful showing from the very first, and with each successive season improved extraordinarily in richness and profusion of bloom. Everyone round about who saw the display was enviously appreciative: appreciative—and not a little puzzled.

One minor admission of defeat, however, she had to put up with. The American Pillar on the front of the house positively refused to climb. It grew well, made plenty of wood, and as sure as May and June came round could be observed everywhere covered with a magnificent wealth of bud and blossom. But the hope to see its manifold lusty sprays reaching up to, nodding at, her window

To make her casement bright
With fragrance and with light

was clearly doomed to disappointment. Despite every effort to curb its spendthrift activities in luxuriant, garish growth to this side and to that it proved quite intractable, persisting obstinately in playing truant so far as the plan originally conceived for it was concerned. It was not a serious matter, however, in view of the marked success crowning her efforts in every other direction.

Then suddenly, in the midst of all this shining promise, on

a modest scale, of years of quiet happiness, of placid enjoyment, in the future, came that cruel reverse, and the little home was left desolate. In a blue vase of some fine, attractive ware, once broken into several fragments and carefully pieced together again by her own deft fingers, over a little table-cloth of white linen made beautiful by her needle, had stood at her side during those last hours, a picked bloom, exquisite, shapely, sweetly fragrant, from one of the standards she had herself tended with such loving care. When the end came, every petal had fallen.

All through her life, you see, and in the moment of her death, this—bondage : the magic, the enchantment, the haunting ritual of the rose !

But time does not stop for tragedy or disaster, and no one of us, we are told, is wholly indispensable. The little household had to shake itself together again, repair, as best it could, the gaping rent in the fabric. Spring came and following spring, with tender, all-pervading benison of days of sun, Nature's gracious fairing, slowly, painfully, to sain the grievous wound.

Yet for long—long and weary days—after, her sister, in talking of their sorrow, would say, " It seems impossible . . . impossible ! . . . " phrasing almost the very words used by another, " her energy, her enthusiasm, her vitality : that gift of enjoying and of giving joy . . . make it seem incredible." Sometimes she would add, " I often feel somehow . . . that it would be possible to get in touch with her . . . still, . . . if one tried. Don't you ever feel that ? " And more than once—recalling, may be, those psychic experiences of the later days—" Don't you ever feel that she might be somewhere near, . . . waiting, . . . *wanting* to speak to you, . . . to give you hope, comfort, assurance ? Perhaps, . . . to bring you *faith ?* " But the lover, the most bereaved of all, found no grain of comfort, no balm of consolation in such a thought : almost, at times, it seemed to him a sort of—sacrilege ; a prying, meddling transgression, . . . a trespass.

In the house, by his wish, things were left almost as they had been in those dream days—now sadly distant—fresh from her touch. The books, the pictures, in the folding portable work-stand, light and handy—and so precious !—her sewing in all its intriguing, intimate minutiae : little boxes of pins, needles in cases, lozenge tins in use for " safeties," hooks, eyes, etc., cards

of tiny mother o' pearl buttons—half used up, knitting needles, balls of soft fleecy "Bee-hive" wool, balls of crochet cotton, spools and skeins of silk, reels of thread, little rolls of "cuttings" —flannel, silk, cotton, cards of coloured wools and box-wood "mushroom" for darning. In a piece of fine insertion for a baby-frock, her own pet needle, hurriedly run in, just as she had left it, jumping up to some urgent call or other.

One change only about the place quickly became noticeable. Already before that first sad summer was far spent—genial and kindly, as few northern summers now are, without: bleak and cheerless with bitter ache of longing, within—the American Pillar abruptly took on a sweetly docile mood. Quitting the rôle of rambler, in which it had gloried so riotously, so long and so obstinately, it now, as if fired, heartened by some gracious invading spirit, hastened with equal zest to make good in its true function of climber. From the warm brown earth about the vigorous root bright green shoots, soon to turn ruddy, pointed and tinged with deep maroon, made their appearance. Sturdy and lively with sap, they insinuated their way behind the old wood of previous years, lengthened and shot upwards, gradually to unfold in shapely leaf and branch. Up along the wall they ran, working in the angle where a drain-pipe was fixed to the face of the brick, gripping here and there a staple to aid them in their eager ascent. Within a year they had reached the rain-gutter of the roof, found a hold and flung themselves over triumphantly in a swinging festoon, a cataract of multiple sprays.

An astonishing sight in the splendour, the bounteous burden of its blossom the whole rose now became. In the morning sunlight a spray would swing across suddenly and every wide and shining pink, white-centred floweret peep in—a myriad laughing eyes, youthful and sweetly fresh—through the little leaded panes of the upper part of her casement window. Her window that was . . . now his. And never would the enchanting vision fail to bring joy, joy and regret and pang of memories bitter-sweet, to the eyes of the waking and lonely lover.

And now, after a time—hesitatingly, doubtingly, at first—he began to notice something else. Strange!—even when there appeared to be no stir in the air, no appreciable wind, a spray of the rose would brush ever so lightly against the window, tap on the pane.

He was puzzled. An odd disquiet stole on him. On mature consideration, however, he was inclined to put it down to imagination, weariness, over-wrought nerves. He went to the window and looked out. No slightest movement in the trees by the river at the bottom of the road : nearer, no quiver of a leaf—he examined it minutely—in the rose. Imagination . . . evidently.

Yet presently, without fail, when he had almost forgotten about it, reading a book, or writing, perhaps, it would recur—unmistakeable, insistent. As if, . . . yes, as if—he tried, vainly, not to harbour the fantastic thought !—a hand were there, fingers, light and eager, rapping gently on the pane : gently, gently always, . . . yet *anxiously*, imploringly. As one . . . hovering there, waiting, trying to draw the listener's attention.

Only then at last, slowly, from the rich store-house of his memory did he begin laboriously piecing things together, examining, interpreting : all the while a very fury of doubt, question, challenge, . . . half-certainty, seizing him, holding him in its grip. . . .

All through her life, in the moment of her death, . . . and *after ?* . . .

The rose, the rose ! . . .

Over the fields the dawn is coming up, rosy-fingered and golden : where the trees stand by the silent-flowing river, dappling the grass, striping the water-side meadows with lines of light and dark.

I have been writing through the night.

First, in the little sitting-room : surrounded by those objects made precious by her touch, hallowed by the quick glance of her laughing eyes. . . . Her curtains, her cretonne covers on chair and sofa. . . . Her book-case : Shaw, Lady Gregory, Katherine Mansfield—*In a German Pension*, Kipling, Walt Whitman, *The Picture of Dorian Gray ;* above, three or four prizes—Napier Girls' High School, for " Literature," for " English," for " General Knowledge "—*The Newcomes, Ingoldsby Legends, Pride and Prejudice, Cranford* ; *The Man from Snowy River, Irish Love Songs, The Wind in the Willows*, Barrie—*The Little White Bird, The Story of an African Farm, Gardening, " Elia " ;* below, George Moore—*Memoirs of my Dead Life*, Morley Roberts, Arnold Bennett,

*Mr. Britling.* . . . Her pictures : " A. E.," Adrian Allinson, Eddie Morrow, Frank Dobson—*Girl with Cat,* a John drawing in sepia—Irish peasant-women gossiping. The beautiful plaster-cast death-mask, bought in Paris, so well known in the studios, of the woman with the haunting smile found drowned in the Seine—*La Belle Inconnue.* . . . Over the door, the wood-carving—knuckle-bent branch, leaf, flower and fruit of the giant " blue gum," the eucalyptus, of her native clime, with the pair of plump strong-billed " kookaburras " perched on it, the bird so characteristic of that vast wooded territory, the Bush, " down under." . . . On the mantel-piece, Epstein's bronze, token of a friendship that gave her much pleasure, the *Babe's Head :* above it, Félicien Rops' etching, *Le Bout du Sillon :* a manuscript poem framed in *passe-partout*—" The Twilight People,"—" Seumas O'Sullivan." . . . And gazing down on me all the while, the exquisite crayon drawing of her, half in profile, done as a Christmas gift by Frederic Whiting : pensive, a little sad, but, as I find it, wonderfully life-like.

And now, as I finish, in her own room upstairs.

I have been writing because latterly . . . the strain has become intolerable. . . . I must get the thing down on paper, look at it in its logical sequence, and then . . .

Yesterday I had another letter from her sister urging me once more to seek out one who is wise in these matters. She is confident it would bring me peace.

I do not know : I do not know. . . .

The dawn is coming up . . . June 13—her birthday. On the drawn curtain, every moment more brightly golden in the gathering sunlight, a shadow darkens—a shadow, swaying, tremulous.

O hair and hands ! . . . is it a dream ?

High up against the naked sky of blue and pearl a spray swings over . . . quietly, quietly. Eyes ever-bright !

And I remember, "*The petals are kisses.*"

Always now I am waiting, alert, listening : never for long. . . .

As I write these last few words, I hear it again . . . calling me : summoning me, claiming me, enticing me away . . .

*Tap-tap, tap-tap, . . . tap.*

# Sir Ronald Ross: A Many-sided Genius

By R. L. Mégroz.

Fourteen years ago, when I was at Ismailia, on the Suez Canal, a friend sent me a little book of poems entitled 'Philosophies," with the perfectly justified remark that I should "like it." I had never heard of the author. The poet had nearly 20 years before made a discovery in medical science (how mosquitoes carry malaria) which ranks as one of the great events in the history of civilisation. The realisation of this is only now beginning to spread over the western world, so that I perhaps was to be excused for sharing a general ignorance when I first established a contact with the poet. Nevertheless, the fact that Ismailia was no longer malaria-ridden in 1916 was due entirely to the author of "Philosophies." Similarly the cutting of the Panama Canal, and other vast developments in tropical or sub-tropical regions this century are traceable to our knowledge of how to control malaria, yellow fever and other diseases which we now know are carried by mosquitoes. It is not too much to say that the control of malaria in India is the greatest work to be done for the future of that vast country, where, it is reliably estimated, no less than 1,300,000 people die every year of malaria, and quite two-thirds of the population are malarious.

This, if you will, is by the way. But my theme is the genius of this great man who made that discovery while he was an obscure Surgeon-Major in the Indian Medical Service. During his service in India he was also practising the poet's art, which he had made his first love before becoming a medical student. The epic story of his labours may be followed in his amazing *Memoirs*. The appreciative reader of poetry may also follow at least the spiritual drama in that suite of eloquent little poems entitled "In Exile." After all, the great discoverers are not Peter Bells to whom a fact is a fact and nothing more. Ross, in the Latin meaning of the word, went out as one goes to prayers, and *considered*, and was not ashamed to call the stars "immortal Sons of God." He conversed with his soul, dramatising the inner

conflict, and when (beset by disappointments, contumely and despair) he looked at the stars, his soul said :—

. . . . 'For ever they go,
Still onward, on and on ;
And that is why they know
The victory's clarion.'

I said, 'I am too weak
To do more than I must,'
He said, 'Then cease to seek
And perish in the dust.'

and he surveyed the extended world, reminding himself of a humanitarian purpose :—

What are thy mighty deeds,
O Past, thy gains, O Time ?
A dust of ruin'd creeds,
A scroll or two of rhyme ?

A temple earthquake-dasht ?
A false record of things ?
A picture lightning-flasht
Of cruel eyes of kings ?

No, these : a wiser rule ;
A science of ampler span ;
A heart more pitiful ;
More mind ; a nobler man.

The great seekers of truth do not always give expression in words to the moods which sustain them, but so far from these thoughts being "unscientific," we may be sure that they are typical. Without such inspiration how should one, as did Ross, in despite of bodily illness, the laughter and even the animosity of fools, the eclipse of hope, go on for years dissecting mosquitoes and searching their tissues under the microscope—each thousandth part of a millimetre of mosquito-tissue—for a mere problematical parasite ? In addition to one's work for a livelihood, too, and at the cost indeed of professional reputation and promotion.

I should require far too much space to tell the reader of the varied and valuable poetry of Sir Ronald Ross. The long

duration of his practice of writing in verse is indicated by the dates of the pieces in the volume of "Poems" published by Elkin Mathews and Marrot in 1928. They range from 1878 to 1928. Since 1928 Sir Ronald, who has been prevented from moving about freely by a "stroke" of paralysis three years ago, has also had republished by Harrison & Sons his "Fables and Satires." No intelligent reader of modern poetry can afford to ignore either of these volumes, although a greater number of people probably are familiar with the "Philosophies" and "Psychologies" volumes. The latter consists of powerful one-scene dramas. I do not think more than three living poets have done better than Sir Ronald Ross in verse drama, although Ross's two full-length dramas—"The Deformed Transformed" and "Edgar, or the New Pygmalion" have long been out of print, and probably would need a good deal of cutting before they could be played. Considering the condition of the drama, it might be worth while attempting to stage some of Ross's beautiful work.

This sketch is almost unavoidably assuming the character of a catalogue, for there is, I feel sure, no living man who has to his credit such a range and variety of generally unrecognised work. Perhaps I may be allowed to offer the reader some amends. by quoting a conveniently brief piece from "Poems."

"STAR MARCH."

Who shall not adore thee, Queen of Splendour,
  Or can any mortal dread thee?
Angel of the Vision where is God, and sender
  Of swift Stars, O Night divine?

We can see the troops of fierce Stars tramping;
  Hear the thunder of their footsteps;
Sirius and his legions in the vanward, stamping
  With wild rhythm of immortal song.

Lo, his crest of silver smokes with splendour
  Of the deep-descending Day-Star,
And his falchion flashes in the light, Ascender
  Of thy heav'ns, O Shade Sublime!

Giant and the Child of God, Canobus,
  With the flaming Sirius twin-born,
Far above the shadow of the dark world globous,
  Shakes his spear in the light supern.

Holder of the Veil of Heav'n asunder,
  Sirius and Canobus hail thee;
Vega and Aldebaran with songs of thunder
  Hymn thee in thy deeps divine.

It is not difficult to perceive the beauty of this, although a certain amount of technical knowledge of prosody is needed for a full appreciation of the poet's skill.

Not without some misgiving, I must treat "Fables and Satires" in the same arbitrary manner, for the sake of giving the reader at least a glimpse of so rich a collection. "The Toad and the Fays (Dedicated to Philosophers)" happens to be the briefest of the Fables:

There sat a Toad upon a lawn
Lost in a dream of fancy;
His right foot in a Rose was set,
His left upon a Violet,
His paunch upon a Pansy.
Some merry elfins passing by
At sight of him were sore affrighted,
And would have fled; until he said,
"My little dears, if you knew why
I look to heaven thus and sigh,
I think that you would be delighted.
The Stars rise up and fall, the Stars
Do shine in pools and stilly places,
The Lilies blink on sandy bars,
The Midges move in flickering mares;
But I profoundly pore upon,
And reason, think, and cogitate,
And marvel, muse and meditate,
Why had the ancient Mastodon,
So few sad hairs upon his pate?"

A trife? Yes, but perfect in its own sphere. And among examples of fiercer satire, this kind of gay pleasure is offered

many times to the reader of "Fables and Satires." Over and over again one is reminded of the youthful Keats' definition of Poetry as "Might half slumb'ring on its own right arm." Long would one have to search before finding another single volume, of one poet, in which humour is so witty, wit so imaginative, and anger so implicated with beauty and tenderness.

How strange it is then, to turn from the classical grace of Ross's poetry to the thunder and romantic sublimity of his prose fiction! Very few people know anything of Ross the novelist. This is not surprising, since the British Publisher is by no means a good example of the human intelligence (or, *is* a good example, if you are a profoundly pessimistic philosopher). Only one of Sir Ronald's novels, "The Revels of Orsera" (John Murray) is in print. Two others have been out of print for 20 to 30 years. One of them, "The Spirit of Storm" sold out of its first edition published by Methuen's in 1896. It was not reprinted. The other, entitled "Child of Ocean" was published in 1889 by a firm which went bankrupt immediately after. When I say that this marvellous story based on the theme of man in solitude on an island is a greater work than Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe," I cannot expect to be taken seriously. But I do say it, and one day it will be republished and acclaimed for the masterpiece that it is. The author's observations while stationed on the Andaman Islands in the Indian Ocean serve him in making the most of his brilliant gift for description. But the descriptive passages are fitted into a dramatic pattern which shows us the spiritual awakening of a man who grew up brutish in solitude.

As in "Child of Ocean," so in "The Revels of Orsera" and "Spirit of Storm," the novelist is also a dramatic poet, and his aim seems to be to show the fundamentals of human nature through significant actions which are magnified on the screen of sublime natural scenes. His predilections here are for tropical storm at sea, wonderful caves, and the grandeur of lonely mountains. No novelist in English literature—not even Hardy or Conrad—has used the pathetic fallacy, by which nature becomes the accomplice of the human heart, with more magnificent effects than are to be found in the prose of Sir Ronald Ross.

Of Sir Ronald's many mathematical works (three have been published this year!—and he is 73). I am not competent to speak. But they have been treated with respect by two

mathematicians from whom I solicited a review to include in my book on Ross's life and work. It is not without significance, even for the unmathematical person, that when Sir Ronald Ross first threw himself with youthful zeal and inadequate academic knowledge into the study of mathematics, he invented a technique in vector-geometry which, unknown to him, had been invented by Sir Isaac Newton and a pupil long before. Since then however he has done much work on Solid-Space Algebra and allied branches of the science, and his use of mathematics for calculating the incidence of diseases has proved of considerable value to medical science.

Having had the privilege of many talks with Sir Ronald, I can most usefully conclude this inadequate sketch by repeating an assertion he made to me, that there is no radical distinction between the intellectual operations of the scientist and of the artist. It might seem to be adequately sustained by his own combination of poetic power and scientific imagination. He lead up to it from another point, because I had asked him if the scientist's way of thinking differed fundamentally from that of the unsophisticated, untrained person.

"No, I don't think so," he said. "I agree with Huxley, who said that science is organised commonsense. But, of course, it means constant application of thought and of the faculties towards obtaining as much evidence as possible on both sides of the question. The scientific man must be absolutely impartial. That is, he must also be critical and, moreover, enthusiastic in collecting evidence. He does not jump to conclusions, and he must avoid party feeling. Unlike a politician, he does not think in mobs. That is the point."

"Is there," I asked, "a similarity in the mental processes of the scientist and of the artist, in the way of using imagination to bring things appropriately together?"

"I consider the scientific discoverer *is* an artist; he is of the same type."

Such an attitude is but the reflection of a noble life's work which reveals to us, as an object of contemplation, the inspiring power and beauty of a work of art.

# Literature in France

"THE FRIEND OF RÉMY DE GOURMONT."

Natalie Clifford Barney, American by her parents, French by all else, though of a younger generation than Stuart Merrill and Vielé-Griffin, has generally been regarded as the third angle of the triangle which the United States has contributed to modern French literature. Of late Julian Green has come along; and no doubt there will be a handful more in the next few years, for of the many young Americans now being educated in France some will not fail to bestow their poetry or novels on the world, and they will bestow them in French. But whatever they may be like they will hardly repeat the performance of Nathalie Barney who is not so much an authoress as a woman, and is known as much by her strange house, her way of life, as by her books. Merrill and Vielé-Griffin never existed much for Paris except by what they printed. Griffin lives retired in the country; Merrill's life was spent either travelling in Europe or in the cafés of the Quartier Latin. "Mees" Barney is a personage who is known to most of the branches of Parisian life and who knows them all well—legal, theatrical, political, and the just fashionable—all but the military and ecclesiastical, where her sympathies give out. As she takes people on their face value, or rather upon what their value is at the moment to herself, without troubling about their actual value out in the street or the value ascribed to them by people in general, she has a great number of friends.

In front of her new book, *Aventures de l'Esprit*, she has placed a chart. Nothing more curious has been seen since the renowned *Carte du Tendre* devised by the *Précicuses* of the seventeenth century. There, in the centre, is her house, and all round it the wide sheet is black with names of those who have the right of entry. Friends, friends, friends,—to lose yourself amid thickets of friends,—pouring towards her door. All sorts of animals, fur and feather; and if not the Chief Rabbi in person to give his benediction to the assembly, at least his ersatz in the shape of the erudite Solomon Reinach. Seeing the unruffled smoothness with which she receives them all, he would be indeed keen-sighted who could detect a preference, or a judgement. Did she like Isadora Duncan better than Liane de Pougy? Does she esteem the mental processes of André Gide more than those of Paul Valéry? Does she love this very beautiful woman, does she loathe that fustian man? Or is it the other way about? Watch her closely as the afternoon light wanes on the old garden in the very heart of Paris. She keeps her secret; you will never know.

And that is just it about Miss Barney. To those who would know the secret enfolded within the other secrets, who would see and know just what nobody else sees and knows, she never betrays herself. Always the same smooth surface. Never the light up, the sudden flame. In this new book of hers she groups certain of her friends and tells what she has seen in them, never what she has felt for them. Perhaps she really feels nothing except a tepid pity for the weaknesses she discerns so unfailingly. Sometimes in her intercourse as well as in her book she gives these friends a little friendly pat, and when she draws away her hand there is blood on her nails.

She has the air of excusing herself for letting appear any knowledge and any sentiment, and sentiment in fact she does not let appear. Like certain Frenchwomen of the eighteenth century, the only books that interest her are by people she knows. In dealing with writers her criticism goes always from the writer to the books, not the other way, which is surely the better way. But sometimes by a phrase of observation apparently purely exterior, she throws fire-light on a man which reveals him far more plainly than all the white search-lights of others lengthily applied. So with Proust. When she marks the deep rings which solitude had set about his eyes, you get the shock of a sudden revelation of truth. To read the accounts of him, one would think he was overburthened with friends. Certainly, friends he had of all shapes and sizes, and it is clear that he liked to abuse himself with the thought that he counted much for these friends and that he was constantly in their thoughts amid the whirl of their diversions. But he was sick, and people shun the sick and the poor and the sad. His enormous letters are a sign of a man who had little opportunity to talk, and who, when he got that opportunity, bored people, as he did Princess Bibesco. Another reporter, the Duchess of Clermont-Tonnerre, tells of a dinner at the Hotel Ritz of which Proust was the host ; and you have a vision of the guests gradually drifting away from their host, failing in attention, seeking their entertainment among themselves, and leaving Proust to his imaginations of friends, phantoms, with the night of solitude about his eyes.

As for Miss Barney and her " Mental Adventures," here under consideration, it is to her credit that to the man or woman who is, has been, or will be rich and respectable, she offers the same place on her cruel and dispassionate scales as to the latest Hagar come in from the wilderness. So much so indeed that a reader falls to sighing : " Oh, if she would be only now and then a little sentimental, seem to *share* a little the human weaknesses she dissects ! " This lack of emotion in her deprives one who writes about her of the adequate emotion to write about her. It is of course a general truth that to be dispassionate is to see clear ; but the clearest of all seeing, believe it ! comes with the flame of passion. There is this to be said for Miss Barney : Her dispassionateness often neutralizes her cruelty, and never the other way about. Were it otherwise, be sure we should not have the cotton-wool wrappings she provides for Americans with such names as Djuna Barnes, Gertrude Stein, Miriam Loy. For of late she has manifested an interest in America and American products which she had hitherto completely eliminated—much more than Griffin, who translated Stephen Crane, ever did, or Stuart Merrill either. Still, she belongs to no American clubs in Paris and is never seen at American manifestations. Her judgement of French people and things is generally sound ; not so her judgement of Americans. The reason is that she brings the French standards of value, which are those of a highly civilized people who have lived so long as a social organization that they know all the subtleties, *finesses*, the traps to avoid, to bear on semi-civilized objects, barbarian if you will, not sensitive at all to such delicate instruments, or even aware of them. In the new American colonization of Paris Nathalie Barney cuts no figure. To the Rough-necks of Montparnesse she is hardly a name ; speak to them about her and they will reply, " You got me beat." Others, more enlightened, will ruminate vaguely : " Barney ? Oh yes, *I* know ! The friend of Rémy de Gourmont."

This fashion of describing a person as the friend of some one supposed to

be well known is not always an advantage for the second term. Certainly, Poole of Nether Stowey was the friend of Coleridge, and that is all there is to be said about Poole. But Hogg, who is never mentioned without the phrase: "The friend of Shelley," is a writer quite worthy of remembrance for his own sake. So too Watts-Dunton, a poet and critic of parts, is swamped under the names of Rossetti and Swinburne. Sometimes these ascriptions are not even true. It is indeed hard if one has to pass for the friend of certain men and women one has known and intensely disliked.

But such considerations do not apply to Miss Barney's friendship with Gourmont. That was a real friendship, cherished on both sides, certainly as much by the man as by the woman. She found the hermit-philosopher living sadly with his shadows, and drew him out into the light of day. To her he wrote his *Lettres à l'Amazone*, and others more intimate which have been privately printed. Surely he considered her a benefit in his life; perhaps he loved her. It is not so clear what she got from him. But in all her writings the only pages coloured with emotion are the few she devotes to Gourmont. For her he has never died.

Rémy de Gourmont, poet, philosopher, scholar, philologist, novelist, to-day rather neglected, was no doubt the one great critic since Sainte-Beuve. And he was a great critic from just the same reasons as Sainte-Beuve was. He had scope: to whatever he turned he brought first-hand knowledge and a first-rate intellect. As with Renan and Anatole France, the cause of his neglect by this later generation is his rationalism and his tendency to materialism. To-day what is required is the transcendental, neo-Platonism, Buddhism, and on a lower scale, black magic, the miracle. Mysticism is certainly very strong just now in many quarters. Before the war you might pick up under the arches of the Odéon six books and magazines devoted to materialism and anarchism to one devoted to mysticism. Now, it is just the opposite which is the case. And since Gourmont and Anatole France, it is hard to recall any rationalist who counts for much. What was admirable in Gourmont was his serenity, his friendliness to all manifestations of life, when one thinks of his shocking deformity, the injustice and neglect he suffered till near the end of his life. and some other reasons he had to find the earth a wry abode.

This serenity seems to be the only thing that Miss Barney has taken from Gourmont. She has apparently no religion, but Gourmont is not responsible for that. Gourmont's serenity in her becomes polite interest, which is only a veil for indifference. She has hitherto chosen to express her views of the cage in which she moves with a certain daintiness and extreme awareness among a crowd of bipeds who resemble her without being like her, in that form which has been a favourite in France since the seventeenth century—the *Pensée*, the aphorism. Look not to her to attempt solutions of the relation of man to the universe, to the state, or even unto other men, except in conditions much restricted. She is solely interested in men and women in society, and on a definite plane of society. It is quite obvious that to men and women who have to stand in the bread-line and wash the children's clothes her *Pensées* can have no possible application. They apply to those who are in a situation of life created by money, or who, at any rate, know the rules of the game in that situation. This need not take from the importance of her reflections. If I were asked for a sub-

ject of thesis, I should be inclined to suggest: "The Effect of Money on Character." A man or woman who has been poor, say till forty, and then becomes rich, has the character profoundly modified. And if they have been rich up to that age and suddenly become poor, the change of character is equally marked. Horace Walpole would have been a different man if he had been poor; Poe and Baudelaire and Dostoevsky different men if they had been rich. What Miss Barney offers to her rich people is a code for their time of life—time being here taken in the sense of the Prayer Book—"Give peace unto our time, O Lord!" Only it is not peace and uniformity which occupy her, but discord and jar. That would seem to be what she has seen the most of; and that, an austere critic might say, is what she strives to produce, from a detached artistic desire to produce anarchy in well-disposed households. That a man should slay or otherwise manhandle wife or mistress, still more, that the woman should slay or otherwise bedevil the man, seems to her in the nature of things and what there is best to expect. The man and woman who love each other are slobberers; the child-bearing woman a dreadful spectacle, deformed, repugnant. Yet she does not seem to be a pessimist or gloomy. She is disparaging, and she has faith in hardly anything. Whether such a mental attitude promises a pleasant old age for her, I cannot say; but I should think not. As for love between man and woman, her view can be illustrated by an anecdote from her native land. Calvin Coolidge, ex-President of the United States, came out of church one Sunday after hearing a sermon on adultery. Some one asked him what he thought of the preacher. "He's against," said Mr. Coolidge.

This same "adultery," and all the word signifies, must have a pretty strong hold on human nature to survive all the discouragements it has got. The laws in all the western nations set traps for it. The idyll very easily becomes the law-suit. The Christian Churches organize to discourage it. With so many questions ot vast importance clamouring for attention, they are engaged promulgating decrees about length of skirts and shortness of sleeves. What misery! With all the swindlers reducing their dupes to poverty and wretchedness, with the manifold injustices and tyrannies flourishing on the earth in this year of disgrace, it is "Adultery" that remains the principal sin for the Churches of Christ, and the adultery-baiter is quite as zealous as the heresy-hunter. Also the Miss Barney here under notice—yea, even the friend of the tolerant and lucid Rémy de Gourmont—she too joins in the hue and cry. Turn over the pages of her *Pensées d'une Amazone*. The brief sharp aphorisms against love, and the men and women who are such sentimental fools as to love and be loved by one another, tap like pellets of sleet.

And to think that some of the many eminent gentlemen and ladies who from time to time give their opinion of her and her work would have it that she is a pagan, even as they dub the poems and romances of her still remembered friend, Renée Vivien, Paganism. Renée Vivien, whose family name was the more subdued Anglo-American Pauline Tarn, had really the soul of an Ulster Protestant. Her waspish attacks on men, and the ignominies she imputed to them, had their origin rather in the Shorter Catechism than in any variety of Paganism yet beholden. She thought she was a pagan because she garbed her legs in Sappho's cast-off stockings. But it is much harder to be a pagan than to be a Protestant. That very Gourmont, already mentioned, wrote cleverly: "The

Catholic Church leaves Paganism naked and then turns away and cries: 'Do not look! If you do you will commit a sin.' The Protestants stuff Paganism into a sack." An incredible deal of loose nonsense is talked about Paganism. It is taken as a synonym for orgies. This is in great part due to St. Augustine. Now Augustine's attack on Paganism in "The City of God" has all the exaggeration of a hustings speech by a government leader against a weak and disorganised opposition. At the time Augustine wrote Paganism was well-nigh dead. He gave it the final kick. But in its heyday and early in its decline it was something different from what he shews. A pagan of the second century, such as Apuleius, who practised his religion, was devout, and had a chapel in his house, was as worthy a man in many respects as most Christians of that time, or even now, and more so in quite a few.

But it is time to say farewell to Miss Barney, and we do it in the hope that what has been written here will set readers who relish the caviar of literature to examining her books for themselves. To all such it may be promised that they will not waste their trouble. And, as it happens, those who are not quick at the French need not stay for that. For she seems now disposed to take up with what is, I suppose, her mother-tongue, and this year has published a novel in English called "The One who is Legion, or A.D.'s After-Life." (London: Partridge and Co.). She has in past years written poems in English as well as in French (*Poems et Poèmes* she named one of her volumes), excellent poems too, original in matter and expression, a kind of poetry that no one else writes. She has not the position she deserves as a poet. The only reason to account for this is that her poetry is little known because it has been published almost by stealth in extremely limited editions. If she were to collect her poems and publish them in an ordinary octavo at a price which should not defy the purse of those who take the 'bus, she would doubtless get her meed of recognition as a poet.

The novel, so to call it, above mentioned, is the book of hers I like best. It shews too that she has the power of self-renewal. Why it has been issued privately instead of being published and sent out to the Press in the ordinary method, is more than I can say. It is a book which cannot be said to have a plot, but it has what may be called a *scheme*, and that scheme has not such clarity as Anatole France and Gourmont valued. As well as I understand it, the narrator is not only a disembodied spirit, but a fusion of many spirits. This enables the narrator, a being without sex, like the angels of Swedenborg, to climb back, as it were, along the past lives of the three or four persons presented and re-edify their story. That, at least, is how the thing appears to me, but very likely I have it wrong. "And as thought is imperishable—as it leaves its stamp behind it in the natural world even when the thinker has passed out of this world—so the thought of the living may have power to revive the thoughts of the dead, such as those thoughts *were in life*." Thus wrote Bulwer Lytton, and in his words may be some clue to the scheme of "A.D.'s After-Life." Better I cannot offer.

However, the interest of the book does not depend on its nebulous scheme, but on the entirely real and even realist descriptions, which are all intensely vivid. Surely nothing better of the kind has been written in a long time than the scenes of the French sea-side resort and of the mountain village. The

characters too are vivid—one, the Glow-woman, the best in the book, is one of those rare characters that you get to know and even feel intimately, minutely,—for the realistic author avoids no detail, not even the scent of the lady's bath-sponge. Colette is supposed to reveal her women as only a woman can do, but Colette has never made any woman more palpable than Miss Barney's "Glow-woman."

The only influence appears to be Joyce, and that is not very marked. It is in no wise marked on the author's style, but more on her presentation. Her English, considering the artistic company she favours, Steins and Weins, etc., is a surprisingly articulate utterance. She does not deliver herself wholly, or even for the greatest part, in jargon, and at her worst careening manages to preserve a certain degree of balance. There is now a sort of universal Smart-Woman writing. It is the horror of horrors. One of its main characteristics in English is the excessive use of the word *one* as a first-personal pronoun. But it is by no means confined to England. Americans, French, Germans, Slavs, Scandinavians, have that style, and Japanese and Chinese too, no doubt. Among them, a remnant, not devoid of merit, might be likened to the composer Rachmaninoff as he appears in his nice American store-suit: inside, as much as you want of talent; outside, "What is being worn. Our latest cut."

But Miss Barney's writing, whether in French or English, has not been affected by that style. It is obvious that her French writing lacks some qualities which the writings of three or four contemporary Frenchwomen have, but they in turn lack something that she has. Her writing suits what she has to express, which is neither passion nor deep emotion, but cold observation and irreverence. Her preference for expressing herself in aphorisms she carries into English, but this does not do so well in English as in French. In English a page of aphorisms is likely to look like a catalogue, and the truth is that one or two pages of "A.D.'s After-Life" read like the catalogue of an auctioneer. Her English shews no trace of French idiom—a remarkable feat, and one which was never compassed by Stuart Merrill, whose English writing always looked as if it had been thought in French.

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Many of the French women in actual practice as authors write displeasingly. Their syntax may be often correct enough, but when it comes to the flavour of their writing, which is what we understand by style, that is usually disagreeable. Even when they have stuff not uninteresting to impart, they put it forth with such insolence, it is so smart and jazzed up, that the meat is destroyed by the sauce. It must be the same in England and America: such inflictions are never confined to one country.

Mary Webb's "Precious Bane" has lately appeared in a French translation under the title, "Sarn." From the well organized noise of its release, it would seem that the publishers, the same people who published "David Golder," thought they were in for another popular success of the same kind. If it be indeed so, they will surely be disappointed. Not that "Precious Bane" is not a good novel; but it is what is called in France a *roman régional*. If the French fight shy of their own *romans régionaux* it is too much to expect that they will take kindly to a novel dealing with foreign rustics. In France the

readers of books are found in the large towns. Now your town-dwellers do not want to read about country life. They do not understand it very well even when it is French. They are not very patient of rural scenes even at their favourite diversion, the Screen.

Anyhow, the publishers' drumming up of " Sarn " led me to read " Precious Bane " in the original to see what Mary Webb's style, much vaunted in some quarters, would render. To my mind it is a good style, and at times even beautiful, better than Katherine Mansfield's, not so good as Stella Benson's. A good, and also a deliberately planned and constructed style, of which some of the elements are in " Lorna Doone." When Mary Webb sat down to write she meant to put the style on it, as much as Pater or Max Beerbohm.

Such, I confess, is the kind of writing I prefer, and I will read more of Mary Webb's books when occasion offers. But there is another kind of writing, also produced by women, which has a far more general appeal and is not without attractiveness. Here the effect of style is got not by weighing words in jewellers' scales and harmonizing sentences, but by the amiable character-features of the writer—her good-humour, cheerfulness, easiness, shining through words in themselves not choice, the small change of journalism. Such in France are Marie-Louise Pailleron and Germaine Acremant, and in England Sophia Cleugh.

With such gifts, Mme. Pailleron has lately succeeded in making even a book of topography enthralling. *Le Ruisseau de la Rue du Bac*, she calls it—that ancient district lying between the Quai d'Orsay and the Boulevard Saint-Germain where her celebrated family has dwelt for over a hundred years. Here, into this tangle of old streets, a thin gentleman from Yorkshire in a black coat and buckled wig stepped out one evening from the Hotel de Modene, and pausing at a glover's to ask the way to the Opera Comique, ended by sitting down beside " the handsomest Grisset, I think, I ever saw," and feeling her pulse. " And how does it beat, sir ? quoth she." Every second house in these streets has its history, gay or tragic or sad. Here is a quarter through which numbers of foreigners pass between spring and autumn, but for most of them 'tis but a bridge between the Louvre and the Bon Marché. Were they to read Mme. Pailleron's book they would be sorry not to tarry a little to gaze on old houses which have sheltered such strange doings in the life of man, so many mysteries.

As for Germaine Acrement, she must be the most popular of all the French women who write. Her books are certainly the most widely diffused, for they appeal more than those of any other to wide and diverse sections of the reading population. They are read in convent-schools, by the military in garrison towns, at the seaside in summer. Those naive vice-crusaders who still indicate Paris as the sink of vice, may take heart from the fact that a dramatization by her husband of Mme. Acrement's novel, *Ces Dames en Chapeaux Verts*, which is no more advanced and cynical and indecent than the works of Jane Austen, was one of the few stage successes of the last season. It ran for nearly a year.

VINCENT O'SULLIVAN.

# Bibliographical Notes

THE EVOLUTION OF PUBLISHERS' BINDING STYLES, 1770-1900. By Michael Sadleir. (Constable and Co. 25s. net.).

Now more than ever the purely physical aspect of the book has become important, for the modern collector rigidly, and rightly, insists upon his volumes being, as far as possible, in their "original state." Mr. Michael Sadleir, to whom in many other directions collectors are already deeply indebted, has now come forward with a guide-book which will be indispensable to all who are interested in that period during which the book in its outward form underwent the greatest multiplicity of changes—the period 1770-1900.

The date selected for the beginning of his survey had of necessity to be a somewhat arbitrary choice, but it does roughly synchronise with an epochal change in the history of book-manufacture. Before the last quarter of the eighteenth century practically all books came from the publishers with no better covering than light boards or flimsy wrappers, innocent of lettering. These covers were regarded as having no permanent value, and merely served to keep the sheets clean until such time as the book would be sent to the professional binder and given a protective covering of leather. Now, however, an enterprising publisher made a new departure and placed a book upon the market in which stout vellum-backed boards were to take the place of paper wrappers and which, significantly, bore a printed paper label on the spine.

Mr. Sadleir rightly insists upon the importance of the printed label, for it meant that now a publisher's binding was considered to have some lasting value and that the buyer might be satisfied to keep the book, for a time at any rate, in that state. The earliest book of this kind discovered by Mr. Sadleir is a copy of Goldsmith's *Experimental Philosophy*, 1776. This book appeared in stout boards, with vellum back and printed label, and is an abnormally early example. Publishers are notoriously conservative, and another twenty years passed before the paper label became at all common.[1]

That labels were issued by publishers in some rare instances as early as the middle of the seventeenth century is a conjecture which remains open to some doubt. Mr. Sadleir quotes the interesting case of Alexander Ross's *Pansebia*, published in 1658, in which between the signatures A7 and A8 was inserted a blank leaf, on one side of which was printed from copperplate the title of the book, lettered upwards. "This," says Mr. Sadleir, "was clearly intended for use, if required, on the spine of the book's binding."

But might not this label have been intended to serve an entirely different purpose—that of forming a guide for the printer and an easy mark whereby he could distinguish the sheets of the various books as they lay flat in the printing-room? In the *Pansebia* instance the position of the blank leaf does not quite fit in with this surmise, but I have before me as I write a copy of Richard Ames's *Sylvia's Revenge*, London, 1688, in which the otherwise blank leaf A1 bears on

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[1] An early Dublin printed example is Joshua Edkins's Collection of Poems by Several Hands, 1789. This book was issued in "all-over" blue boards with a printed paper label lettered in black within a dotted border. Mr. Sadleir has not seen more than four or five books of this date with publisher's labels.

the recto the title of the book, similarly lettered upwards. Now as this book is merely a slim quarto of 22 pages, and as the letters forming the label are printed from inch-type, it is clear that their use as a spine-label was not intended.

But all this is really a digression and somewhat far removed from the main subject of Mr. Sadleir's study, which is more intimately concerned with nineteenth century development of book manufacture. The author refers to his subject as an "obscure and contentious" one, but few will venture to disagree with the majority of his conclusions. Such interesting questions as the date of the first cloth-bound book, the discovery of the processes of gold-blocking and ink-blocking on cloth, the appearance of "concurrent," "secondary" and "presentation" bindings—all these are handled with a large degree of finality. This volume will send many collectors to their shelves in search of the exception to Mr. Sadleir's rule, but in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred it will not be there for the asking.

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## The Bibliography of William Beckford.

A Bibliography of William Beckford of Fonthill. By Guy Chapman. (Constable and Co., 25s. net.).

From the same publishers, and in the same series, comes Mr. Guy Chapman's (in conjunction with Mr. John Hodgkin) Bibliography of William Beckford. If Beckford had not written *Vathek*, it is safe to say that no classification of his books now or at any time would have been deemed necessary; but that classic story has long since made him a "collected" author. Byron said that as an Oriental story *Vathek* was greater than even *Rasselas*, and time has not altered that verdict.

The extraordinary rarity of early editions of Beckford's books is in itself a sufficiently good reason for this bibliographical enterprise, for now collectors will know at least what to look for. Of *Vathek* itself, only two copies of the Lausanne edition of 1787 and only one of the Paris edition of the same year have appeared in the salerooms during the past twenty years; and not even in the British Museum can one find a copy of the first editions of *Epitaphs* or of *Azemia*, or even of the first issue of the 1816 *Vathek*. In fact, practically all Beckford's early books can, without exaggeration, be described as "excessively rare."

The vexed question of the priority of the Lausanne or the Paris edition of *Vathek* is dealt with in careful detail, and it is interesting to note that on this important matter Mr. Hodgkin takes a view opposed to that of his collaborator.

The book is splendidly illustrated with photographs and facsimile title-pages, and the binding (which is uniform with that of Mr. Sadleir's book) is a notable and entirely successful experiment in modern book-production. Congratulations are due to Messrs. Constable on this excellent new bibliographical series.

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## BOOKSELLERS' CATALOGUES.

Messrs. Elkin Mathews' new catalogue, their thirty-second, deals with English Literature in the Early Nineteenth Century. It is gracefully introduced by Mr. Edmund Blunden and is a very pleasant excursion, taking in the byways

as well as the highways, through one of the most fascinating periods in the whole range of English letters. All the great names, of course are represented here—Shelley, Keats, Lamb, Coleridge, Byron and Wordsworth—but the lesser lights also shine with their own quiet radiance.

This is as it should be. If you "collect" a poet, you should collect his circle; admirers of Keats will naturally want the books—and some of them are rare and costly—of John Hamilton Reynolds; no collection of Lamb is entirely complete unless it is accompanied on its shelves by the poems of Charles Lloyd and George Dyer; Southey, and even Cottle of Bristol, are needed to round off one's set of Coleridge.

This catalogue registers, in terms of money values, the verdict of the twentieth century upon the writers of the Romantic Era, and it is noteworthy to see that Scott, Shelley and Keats are the outstanding names, although a unique copy of *Lyrical Ballads* is the most highly-priced book in the collection. In the case of Scott, belated justice is at last being done, after the neglect of half a century. Charles Lamb one takes for granted—no author, save Goldsmith perhaps, is less affected by the vagaries of book-collecting fashions—but it is pleasant to see that Leigh Hunt too is coming into his own. Irish collectors will find a long list of Thomas Moore's first editions of interest, and admirers of a poet whose reputation the late Sir Edmund Gosse did much to restore will not be altogether surprised to see £8 asked for a presentation copy of a book by the little-known Thomas Wade. The bibliographical notes are excellent throughout.

Messrs. William H. Robinson issue their latest catalogue from their new London address (16-17 Pall Mall, S.W.), to which they have transferred their Rare Book department, and it is a worthy successor to the many fine lists issued during recent years from their Tyneside house. Outstanding is a remarkable copy of *Great Expectations*, the earliest issue and in "mint" state. As this book is rarely found except in "ex-library" condition, its appeal to Dickens collectors should be very strong. Of Dublin interest is a copy of Fielding's *Stultus versus Sapientem*, one of the few recorded copies. Although this bears on the title the legend, *London printed, and Dublin reprinted by E. Bate in George's Lane*, 1749, no copy of a London edition has ever been discovered, and even the Dublin edition is of excessive rarity. Amongst other attractive items I note the first edition (and the first issue) of Donne's Poems, 1633; the very scarce *True Declaration of the Estate of the Colonie in Virginie*, London, 1610; one of the six known copies of the earliest issue of Byron's *Manfred*; and—a book that is rapidly becoming uncommon—the first Dublin edition of *The Vicar of Wakefield*. The copy here offered is of the issue with the first volume undated, to which Mr. Dix in his list of Dublin-printed Goldsmith books gives priority. M. J. MacM.

# Book Reviews

## THE MONARCH WHO LOST AMERICA.

THE STRUCTURE OF POLITICS AT THE ACCESSION OF GEORGE III. By L. B. Namier. 2 vols. London. Macmillan. 30s. net.

ENGLAND IN THE AGE OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION. By L. B. Namier. London. Macmillan. 25s. net.

In these magnificent volumes Mr. L. B. Namier destroys a legend and clears the ground for a new appreciation of the circumstances in which the American Colonies of England became the United States of America. There is probably no one writing to-day who knows more about his chosen period than Mr. Namier, and in these volumes he gives evidence not only of vast knowledge but also of amazing industry. These are easily the most important contributions to the history of the politics of the 18th century since Lecky wrote, and when compared with that suave historian Mr. Namier is ruthless. He is clearing his way through a jungle of fallacious undergrowth, and when he has completed his work on *The Imperial Problem during the American Revolution,* of which these volumes are but the prologue and introduction, it will be no longer possible to mix motives and obscure facts in one of the most significant periods in the history of the world. From this period, and from the lessons it inculcated, have sprung those two great forces of the contemporary world, the United States of America and the British Commonwealth.

Since 1912, Mr. Namier has been working steadily on his larger undertaking, and had there been no interruption by war and otherwise he would probably have finished the work ere this. In *The Structure of Politics* is contained what is in effect only the introduction to his larger work. Here, men not parties are his material ; indeed, he is of opinion that in reality there were no parties actually in being at the time, and that " Whigs " or " Tories " in the generally accepted significance of the titles had little or no cohesion until a later date. Whether this is so in fact is still open to debate : Walpole could speak familiarly of Tories, and this he could hardly have done had there been no party alignments and allegiances. Throughout his work Mr. Namier is continually opening speculative paths of this kind, and his books are as certain to be centres of discussion as the starting-point of a new evaluation of a great period.

The men who provide the material for *The Structure of Politics* were painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, shared in the brilliant social life of Holland House, kept both their fortunes and their political grip on England, but did manage to lose the American Colonies. For the first two of these achievements they are praised, but for the others history has been as harsh in its judgments as it well could be. Only Fox has managed to come through the inquisition with credit ; but now there is a new movement to rehabilitate Wilkes. The " corruption " of the Government under George III. has been the theme of many a fervent political reformer during the 19th century, but Mr. Namier takes away the sting of the indictment by showing that the King, Bute, and even Holland, were not by any means so villainous as they have been reputed: they were merely weak men

who failed to wield their great power. The "corruption" is submitted to an analysis that must remove it once and for all from the pages of history ; if there were "corruption" at all Mr. Namier shows that it came from below rather than from above.

It has been believed that the "corruption" of late 18th century politics flowed from the King himself, and that he scattered largess without stint. In this work the legend is corrected : it will be seen that the money used was comparatively modest in amount, and that it was given at the request of the recipients or their friends. It was, therefore, rather in the nature of a royal charity, and might nowadays have been called "secret service vote." The legend that the money was used for the purchase of safe seats in the House of Commons is demolished by the full details given of the expenditure and the analysis of its distribution. Of course, there always remains the scandalous use made by the King of the Irish Civil List for the provision of funds that would not, or could not, be borne in the Commons vote.

The Chapter-headings will give an indication, but only an indication, of the scope and merit of *The Structure of Politics*, which is certain to be a very valuable source-book for future historians and biographers of the period. In these two volumes he treats of "Why Men Went Into Parliament" (still a very interesting topic of conversation), "The Electoral Structure of England," "Secret Service Money Under the Duke of Newcastle,' "Shropshire Politics and Men at the Accession of George III.," "The Cornish Boroughs," "Two Treasury Boroughs," and a particularly illuminating chapter on "Parliamentary Beggars." In the course of his eight chapters, and an Appendix containing the figures of the Secret Service Accounts, Mr. Namier really rewrites and revalues the entire history of the period, correcting much that needed correction and giving new directions to the historians and biographers of the period for the future.

For *England in the Age of the American Revolution*, which in effect begins his great work, Mr. Namier has had access to the Royal Archives at Windsor Castle, and to the archives of the Marquess of Bute, the Marquess of Lansdowne, the Earl of Minto, and the Earl of Sandwich. He has had, therefore, an immense store of new information at his disposal. This store he has used in a way that will make all future historians of the period his grateful debtors. It is certainly not a book for the general public, although those who have some more detailed knowledge of the period will read it with pleasure and profit ; but Mr. Namier is at all times concerned with the gleaning and imparting of information rather than the painting of glowing word-pictures. In consequence his books make somewhat heavy demands upon the reader ; and while they will be thought to be delightfully written by students the general reader may be inclined to find them dull. They will be of inestimable value to the student, and to all students they can be confidently recommended.

In *England in the Age of the American Revolution* his interest is concentrated mainly on the parliamentary system as it functioned in the late 18th century. The traditional view is that George III. deliberately set himself to destroy a constitutional system and revive the personal monarchy : but Mr. Namier shows that the whole system was much more personal than constitutional. George III. very cordially detested his grandfather, and when he came to the throne he made a clean sweep of the Ministers, merely because they had been appointed by that

detested grandfather. In somewhat similar circumstances did the ex-Kaiser Wilhelm "drop the pilot" when he dismissed Bismarck. So the young George III. installed Bute in power, and placed himself unreservedly in the hands of his revered friend and tutor. There was thus never an England, dictatorial and aristocratic, in conflict with a democratic America. To have demolished that legend alone would have been no mean achievement, and Mr. Namier's book should do good on both sides of the Atlantic. The fact that he never allows his own contemporary views to interfere with the presentation of a social and political system that has now passed for ever is in itself a great virtue, when it is so easy to endow the past with the ideas of one's own time. These two books are so splendid an achievement that eagerness is a mild word to express anticipation of the volumes that are still to come. L. P. B.

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## LIBERTY.

LIBERTY IN THE MODERN STATE. By Harold Laski. London. Faber. 7s. 6d. net.

Every piece of legislation placed upon the statute books of the nations purports to enlarge the liberty of some class or group in the communities; but in these days it is found that the giving of liberty to one group or class probably means a curtailment of the liberty of others. Only a century ago it was confidently believed that the individual had only to be "let alone" to enrich both himself and the community of which he was a part. By the end of last century it was obvious that such "liberty" was in its effects upon large sections of the population no better than the Roman system of two thousand years ago. When that became plain *laisser faire* lost its philosophical force, and political Liberalism sought a new orientation.

"To prevent harm to others," John Stuart Mill believed to be the only reason for exercising power over any member of a civilised community against his will. But even as Mill wrote his definitions were being challenged. Negative definitions of liberty were found to be inadequate when the powers and functions of government passed from the realm of pure politics into those of economics and sociology. Demands for individual liberty, class liberty, and national liberty, were all conceived in terms of politics; while at the same time the forces generated by the industrial revolution were converting politics into an interesting game for speculative professors and elderly gentlemen. With the advent of Labour and Socialist parties in the world's legislatures the activist, positive State had to come into being.

In Professor Harold Laski this positive state finds its most effective philosopher and propagandist in England. In his "Grammar of Politics," a great book that no politician should ignore, he said all that needed to be said on the subject, but in "Liberty in the Modern State" he chooses to deal with a single aspect of the present position of politics in a more detailed and practical manner.

The book was originally written for delivery as a series of lectures in an American University last year, but events in English politics prevented Professor Laski from going to the United States. In this book, as in all his political

writings, Professor Laski demonstrates his strength as a jurist ; but nowhere does he demonstrate it so felicitously. It is the kind of book that should be read and studied by all the younger people in every country ; because in every country to-day it is the younger people who seem to demand dictators.

In Ireland, as in some other countries, there seems to be a fear of liberty as Professor Laski understands it. It seems to be believed in Ireland generally that the chief function of the State is to deprive the individual of the right to exercise his own choice, and at the same time to undertake all the economic functions of the community. " I mean by liberty," says Professor Laski, " the absence of restraint upon the existence of those social conditions which, in modern civilisation, are the necessary guarantees of individual happiness." The right to make mistakes is inherent in that, and " that is why Pericles insisted that the secret of liberty is courage." A study of this excellent little book will enable everyone to understand why censorships and dictatorships of all and whatever kind are infringements upon the human right to grow up. It is a book that should find its way into the hands of all who would desire a State that is a place fit for individuals to live. L. P. B.

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THOUGHTS OF A SOLDIER. By General Von Seeckt. Translated by Professor Gilbert Waterhouse, with an Introduction by General Sir Ian Hamilton. Pp. xxxi+130. (London : Ernest Benn, Ltd. 1930. 8s. 6d. net.).

Let me say at once that my colleague, Professor Waterhouse, has done his work admirably. His translation reads like an original. It is a model and could not be bettered. I will add that the book was well worth translating. Even the section entitled " Symbols," which appeals least to me, has its documentary interest ; the ideas expressed do not differ essentially from those held by British or by Irish patriots. With the purely military portions of the book I am not competent to deal. On the other parts of the book I hesitate to pass judgment, because I am, of all people, most definitely opposed to General von Seeckt in his ideas on the relation of the State and the Army ; and because he and I start from different premises in our attitude towards the supposed necessity and utility of war. Not that he is a militarist (he objects to the term as a catchword, let me say, not that he loves or glorifies war). Like most soldiers, he is a lover of peace. The worst " militarists " are always civilians. But General von Seeckt would not go with me in my very firmly held opinion that organised warfare, as we know it to-day, is always futile and can never serve any useful purpose whatever. I am not quite clear whether Civil Revolt does not fall into a different category and deserve more considerate judgment. But, apart from Revolt, I believe that nothing worth the winning can ever be won by warfare and that warfare is immoral and ridiculous, and that it is the duty of every good citizen of any country strenuously to oppose the politicians who would drag him and his fellows into warfare, and if they succeed despite his efforts, determinedly to refuse to fight, and to use all means at his disposal to end the war on any terms whatever. This is, I know, the most abominable heterodoxy. But it is a view that is gradually gaining ground—witness the widespread interest shown in both the novel *All Quiet on the Western Front* and the film based on it. War is not

glorious but brutal, cruel and bestial. It does not bring out the best qualities of a man, but the worst. Western European civilisation, such as it was, has been ruined by the European War. I doubt if there is any hope of its redemption. We must, I fear, look to Russia for the reorganization and renewal of the Western world.

I have said that I cannot accept General von Seeckt's views of the relation of State and Army. In the first place, I cannot accept that doctrine which makes of the Nation a something other and greater than all the individuals composing it, and of the State a semi-divine external expression of this metaphysical nation with an inherent claim on the blind obedience of the citizens. For me a nation is simply the totality of the individuals of which it is made up, and the State a committee, in no wise divine or even entitled to special honour or respect, elected or otherwise chosen to fulfil certain functions deemed necessary or desirable. In the second place, the Army, if there must be an Army, must be the servant of the Civil Power, *i.e.*, of the Civilians composing the Nation, and acting through the committee called the State. The Army has and can have rightly no other function but that of protecting the civil population. Not the Army but the civil population "is the State" (in General von Seeckt's sense). Of course I do not refuse to every individual soldier the ordinary rights of a civilian : but I do refuse to him all special rights. A soldier whom I count as a friend said to me during the European War : "The civilian has no rights during wartime." I disagreed and disagree most definitely. Only the civilian has any rights at all. What rights the soldier has he possesses only as a civilian, not as a soldier. My friend was expressing a view which goes further towards the extremest "Prussianism" (or Treitschke-ism) than General von Seeckt would dream of going, for he is not a Prussian in any offensive sense of the word.

Having thus cleared the ground, I can praise General von Seeckt's book without reservation as a most thoughtful and useful contribution to the discussion of the problems he treats—I refer to those not purely technical.

In the chapter on "Catchwords" he very wisely says : "The man who has formed a clear notion of the nature of war, of its necessities, requirements and consequences, to wit, the *soldier*, will take a far more serious view of the potentialities of war than the politician or the business man who coldly weighs its advantages and disadvantages." The General is agreeably sarcastic, too, about the accepted doctrine (accepted in Britain !) that British Imperialism is not an "unseemly lust for power and territory" while German Imperialism clearly aims at this *imperium mundi*, and about the accepted doctrine (accepted in France!) that in France "une nation armée" is a good and right thing, while a similar conception in Germany is "militarism."

The Chapter on "Statesman and Soldier" is admirable, but, to my thinking it conflicts with that on "Army and State"—the chapter to which I take most exception. In the former, the delimitation of functions between the Government and the Head of the Army is most clearly expressed without the slightest flapdoodle, and with a sense of the duty of the army towards the State. But I prefer to pass on to the crucial chapter of the whole book, "The Attainable Object." General von Seeckt divides wars into two main categories, those between *nations* and those between *armies*, the former being those in which "one nation sets out to devour another nation which is better and more comfortably situated,"

the latter those engineered by politicians. The European War, according to him "occupied a middle place ; its causes were political, its dimensions national."

"The risk of war," says the General, "lies essentially in the inequality of military forces, which leads the stronger power to secure its political interest by the threat or the exercise of violence against the weaker. A guarantee of peace therefore lies less in the reduction of armaments than in the observance of agreed proportions." He adds : "Any attempt to take from a state all possibility of self-defence or to restrict that possibility increases the feeling of insecurity in that state and thereby increases the risk of war. A defenceless neighbour is the strongest inducement to war . . ."

General von Seeckt is not an advocate of compulsory military service and of the nation in Arms. For military reasons he finds an Army based on general and compulsory service unsatisfactory. It lacks in "mobility, rapidity and inspiration," and war conducted by armed masses will, he thinks, never secure a decisive result but will end, like the Great War, in a stalemate of endless trenches. The rest of the book is devoted to more technical matters which I will leave alone. I should like to know what General Crozier has to say about them. I have nothing to say.

General von Seeckt's moderate views will no doubt do more to produce the end we both have at heart than my extreme views. We all have to express our own opinions honestly and fearlessly. I have no power and no responsibility beyond those of expressing myself clearly and straightforwardly. General von Seeckt has both power and responsibility and I wish him all success, as an upright and honourable man who seeks the welfare of his own nation in the first place and of the world in the second place. If anything were now needed to convince us that the Germans are in every way as excellent, clear-sighted, clear-thinking, and honest and sincere as anyone else, this book should go far to produce such an effect. For General von Seeckt held high commands throughout the War, and was Commander-in-Chief until 1926 under the German Republic.

R. B.

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A Brass Hat in No Man's Land. By Brig. Gen. F. P. Crozier, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O. Jonathan Cape. 7s. 6d.

Kitchener. By Brig. Gen. C. B. Ballard, C.B., C.M.G. Faber & Faber. 18s.

In war books by professional soldiers one finds, as a rule, an assumption and not an examination of the ethics of militarism. This is something the civilian turned soldier can seldom conscientiously provide ; for, in the war zone, he must remain the explorer who observes from the outside the manners and customs of a new and terrible country, whilst these regular soldiers are, as it were, the natives themselves, beating out for us on their traditional tom toms the very spirit of their own community. It is of considerable interest to note that whereas General Ballard gives us the old tribal music of militarism in all its barbaric purity, General Crozier's war-theme is complicated by variations showing the missionary influence of the pacifist hymnal. This heretical reaction of General Crozier against the ju-ju of his tribe gives his book a fundamental vitality that is not permitted to the much weightier results of General Ballard's tribal orthodoxy. For although General Ballard has all the unspoilt outward

dignity of the aboriginal and General Crozier has a good deal of the outward absurdity of the newly-converted ; the fact of the latter's courageous acceptance of the spirit of the age sets him on a plane where not one of his unconverted tribesmen, though it were the chieftain himself, may approach him.

For one must set a high value on this, as on all glimpses of a true change of heart. General Crozier's militaristic agnosticism is not merely implied but emphatically and repeatedly expressed. An illumination has come to him and by virtue of it his book is lifted above the usual haphazard campaigning memoirs of the soldier who resolves to see if there is anything in the dictum that the pen is mightier than the sword. His book is simply a retrospect of one man's experience of the European War, gossipy despatches without much design or logical sequence, a confused series of emotional Very lights, amid a smoke of indiscriminate memory : but the honesty and courage of his confession of disbelief and above all the humanitarian warmth behind it, kindle the whole book with a sincerity sufficiently intense to claim notice even when we get it beside works of very much more obvious historical importance. For what could be more interesting than to see for ourselves the rising tide of pacifism beginning to eat into the foundations of militarism. This is what General Crozier's book shows us. Here we see the abhorrence of war so universal since the European nightmare, welling up in the oaken heart of the regular British army and overflowing through its very brains. So is an aperture made, as it were in "the wooden walls of England" and pacifism flows in where we least expected, and before our very eyes a British General is swept off his feet and carried away willy nilly, in the arms of the modern spirit. The whole spectacle is Kiplingesque in spirit if not in letters.

Neither by word or implication does General Ballard give us reason to suspect that his highly logical mind has ever allowed itself to question any of the curious assumptions of his accepted profession. His fiercest indictment of the militaristic ethic is an occasional mild suggestion that its consequences are at times "disagreeable," but even then there is usually an inquisitorical hint that these consequences are in the nature of the state—the best thing under the circumstances for people whose fate would otherwise be worse—and that therefore anyone interfering with these consequences are doing the worst possible thing for the victims.

Speaking of the concentration camps of the Boer War he says :—

"The first method had been started by Roberts soon after reaching Pretoria and on paper it seemed likely to give good results. Herds of sheep and cattle were collected, farms were burnt, supplies of every kind were removed or destroyed. Then the trouble began. Women and children were living on these farms and could not be left to starve. Concentration camps were established and by October 1901 over 80,000 refugees had been collected. Some of them settled down contented to be housed and fed at the expense of the enemy ; others gave as much trouble as they could, which was saying a good deal. In addition to this humanitarians in England began to intervene. The concentration camps were seized upon as awful examples of the horrors of war—they were dirty, insanitary, full of germs—in short regular death-traps . . . . . Between complaints from England about dirt and complaints from the refugees about enforced cleanliness the medical officers and others in authority had an uneasy

time. . . . . . . The policy of stripping the country was anything but a success. It caused infinite trouble to ourselves and discontent among the Boers, it sent many men back to the commandos, who would otherwise have remained quiet at home, and it inspired the leaders to some very daring raids."

General Ballard's " Kitchener " is clear, concise and simply comprehensive as a plan of campaign. The balance between Kitchener's career and the surrounding history is well adjusted. The bird's eye view of the Great War is a model of confession and lucidity. The book stands midway between Eslero theoretic dramatization and Arthur's "official" eulogy.

It may be said to be the ablest apologia Kitchener has inspired. It is a disguised panegyric. Through the almost legal restraint, the vigilant impartiality of the survey there may be discerned an admiration and loyalty that by their very discretion gain much in power to convince. Kitchener, judged from this book might be called a "soldier's soldier." We glimpse, here, something of the power of the barbaric virtues and the war genius over the minds of men. A mighty figure emerges touched with the cruel Napoleonic glamour, an awe-inspiring loneliness, an amazing quality of military intuition. Of all the great janissaries that England has reared from Irish cradles this one, perhaps, most clearly exemplifies the nature of the subconscious exploitation involved. N.T.

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JEWELS OF SONG. An Anthology of Short Poems compiled by W. H. Davies. Cape. 6s. net.

This book prettily produced as it is, and bound in pastel-shaded linen, with its admittedly high level of good taste, would make an excellent gift for a young or old person hitherto unacquainted with poetry. For those who make a practice of reading verse it will not prove as invaluable, for the simple reason that it overlaps other collections far too much. It is curious and somewhat disappointing to find the taste of so distinguished a poet so disconcertingly free from those surprises and stimulating personal whimsies, which characterise for example, that prince of anthologies " The Spirit of Man " by the late Poet Laureate. It is true that he has limited himself to poems of not more than twenty-four lines, but even with this excuse he tends to choose the spoilt darlings of former anthologists. Mrs. Meynell, for example, wrote other short poems besides the tiresomely coy " Shepherdess," and surely the time has come for anthologists to glance through Mr. Yeats' later poems before finally deciding on the overworked " Innisfree." The collection's best excuse is, as one might expect from an editor of Herrick's lineage, the predominance of Elizabethans. If it succeeds in stimulating people to read more Campion or Drummond, Drayton or Fletcher then, in spite of the carpings of ungracious critics, it will have justified its existence. M. S. P.

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MY FIRST PLAY. By Lady Gregory. Elkin, Mathews & Marrot. Limited edition to 530 copies signed by the Author. 6s. net.

What a sympathetic saint is this Colman, to whom Lady Gregory introduces us in her charmingly discursive preface ! Among other things she tells us that he kept a mouse for company "and it would awaken him when he was asleep and

when the time would come for him to be minding his Hours." I have read elsewhere that he also possessed a tame bluebottle, which if the Saint was interrupted while reading, would sit on the book and keep the place until he came back. Invaluable pets these must have been!

This little play dealing with a more serious aspect of his life, was written thirty years ago, not for stage production, but for Kiltartan school-children to learn and act. The story is briefly as follows:—King Guaire returns from a day's hunting, full of a miracle he beheld at Dairecaol, of a rainbow of bright birds

"Some red like berries on the ash,
Some blue like pools the spring rain fills;
Some yellow like the furze that flash
Out into flame along the hills"

which drifted across the lake, and seemed to rest "Far off on Burren by the sea"; where it transpires that St. Colman is lying half-dead with hunger, for there is famine in the land. Guaire at first disbelieves the messenger who brings this news, and would have had him put to death, only that Eoghan, an old servant tells how Rhinagh, the Saint's mother (whom King Guaire's father had condemned to death, because he had heard from a soothsayer that she was to bear a more famous son than his) had been saved by angelic ministrants and borne her child in safety. Filled with remorse for his father's envious cruelty, yet hardly daring to believe an unknown ragged messenger, he cries:

"If he my kinsman be and famine-wasted,
I would that God whose hand my table fills,
Would take from me this food that lies untasted,
And set it before Colman in the hills"

This is the great moment of the play, for his prayer is answered, and two angels bear away the feast, and set it before the starving saint, who recovers his strength and lives long to complete his holy work in Burren and Aran, Kilchriest and Kinvara.

The little drama answers its purpose admirably, and children should find its simple rhymed verses both enjoyable and easy to recite, and should follow the naive fairy tale straightforwardness of the narrative with eager appreciation of both St. Colman and King Guaire. M. S. P.

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Christ in the Synagogue. L. Aaronson. Gollancz. 12s. 6d.

Mr. Aaronson is unfortunate in his jacket introduction. The wrapper presentation of the poet gives a list of his influences, announces his poetical articles of faith with the added warning that the tenseness of his Muse does not preclude obscurity, so that the reader picks up the large volume with misgiving. Apart altogether from the fact that one prefers to find out for oneself whence

the poet came and whither he is bound, the suggestion of obscurity on the very threshold of the work is likely to make the keenest of us unwary with the result that we mistake for darkness what is really an excess of light. But let Mr. Aaronson take courage. Sterne was once counted obscure as is to-day Joyce, whilst it was the fashion so to describe such dissimilar poets as Donne, Darley and Browning. Though to be just it must be admitted that their publishers never thought fit to advertise this popular fallacy. Lose the jacket, however, or the memory of its paralysing puff and you will yourself be lost in the enjoyment of the work of a poet whose passion is equalled by his intellect and whose personality emerges unique and triumphant from the struggle between an occidental culture and environment and an insistent, clamouring, atavistic oriental hinterland.

Mr. Aaronson is self-conscious in the literal sense and without the implied blush. He is no drawing-room psycho-analyst seeking out his own complexes and inhibitions with a Nell Gwynn candle. Introspective, he is intuitively conscious of the complicated stuff that has gone into his making and through words which are to him the flame of his thought (not the conventional inadequate medium) he expresses himself.

Words, seek no more to be
The smoke of thwarted fire,
But rise, the flame of me,
The stuff of my desire !

Be not the narrow hearth
To comfort numbed lost hands,
But hands' own perfect birth,
The firetips on the wands !

Flame, fanned by steady breath
From central 'M' of soul !
Rise, spread, till earth beneath
Shines like your aureole !

This young new poet is the reply to such propositions as are heavily laid down by those twin souls Chesterton and Belloc that the Jew is ill-adapted to Western civilisation. There is no room, they think, for Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land. The Jew in the Chesterbelloc fable will for ever be alien amid the Aryan corn. Here is the problem as it presents itself to Mr. Aaronson, himself ever conscious of his Hebraic heirloom :

Within the womb I dreamed
Of palm-trees, cypresses :
Violet sands, white skies :
Figs, pomegranates, grapes :
Deep gardens hiding glooms :
The burr and catch of tongues :

But life betrays him. His first impulse expresses itself thus:

Alien is your world,
Alien world make yours.
Oak tree turn to palm.
Image to pyramid.
Fashion the alien words
To your own subtle tongue.

This artificiality repels him:

Nakedness is my need.
I'll seek no ancient ways
Were once the core's exteme.
No tents unfold, no vines
To struggle against my walls.
No Moses but as Christ.
No David but as Donne.
What runs through me like fire
Seeking to clothe itself
To fashion and to grow
Shall seize for its delight
All that is near to hand,

In this wild twisted life
I link the sun and moon
Great sea and desert wave.
And snow's on Sinai.

This poem is the key to *Christ in the Synagogue* which gives the volume its title. To him " Jesus is Jew tugging from carpet-prayers to upright dealing." He identifies himself and his own travails of the spirit with the history of Jesus and tells us that " Men make Him in the image of their ways from Angelo to Renan." The whole poem burns with a passionate sincerity which rings strangely in the ears in these days when poets thrive on trivialities. The prophetic fire of the past gleams luminously through the unlaboured craft of his verse. He has the religious fervour of Francis Thompson combined with an irony that belongs to Heine. The scene in which Christ, who is sculpted after the virile Epstein fashion, thunders against the Rabbis, who are mainly occupied in pulling each other's dialectic beards is unforgettable.

'Get you home and be alive
Not worshipping but emulating God,
Seeking to match surprise by wild surmise'

Thunderous swept the wheel of his wild words
And spun the Rabbis from the Council Room
Into the night of almond and of may
Where in the runnels by the olive yards
They lay all night in terror of the dogs
That rattled anger from the shadowy trees,
And in the morning, like a drove of ants,
Shuffled to Pontius through the orange groves.

Mr. Aaronson has perhaps made a mistake in making his first book of poems so large for we have grown accustomed to the one mood of the slim volume of verse. But the mistake is only one of psychology and perhaps salesmanship. No one will regret possessing this work for its author is without doubt a poet and poet of consequence.

A. J. LEVENTHAL.

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## EXPERIMENT AND TRADITION.

POEMS. By W. H. Auden. Faber & Faber. 2s. 6d. net.
THE ECLIPTIC. By Joseph Gordon Macleod. Faber & Faber. 2s. 6d. net.
THE ARMED MUSE. By Herbert E. Palmer. Hogarth Press. 3s. 6d. net.
THE ONE UNFAITHFULNESS OF NAOISE. By Moirin A. Cheavasa. Talbot Press. 2s. 6d. net.
THE PURSUIT. By P. P. Graves. Faber & Faber. 2s. net.

At a first reading Mr. Auden appears to be an extremely obscure writer, whose use of language out-Eliot's Eliot, but one is conscious all the time of a challenge and a stimulus in this curious work, which compels one to return to it afresh. His vocabulary is immense, and his metrical experiments and unusual rhyme schemes are extraordinarily versatile. He can "achieve personality in the bare line" which Miss Edith Sitwell declares, and I think rightly, to be an important proof of originality in a poet. The following stanza, for example, has such a fresh poetic merit that one regrets that in the succeeding five he relapses into his habitual obscurity:

"The crowing of the cock
Though it may scare the dead
Call on the fire to strike,
Sever the yawning cloud,
Shall also summon up
The pointed crocus top,
Which smelling of the mould
Breathes of the underworld"

Many of his poems appear to be written against the horror of modern civilization and on this subject he employs a great deal of symbolism of which it is almost impossible for the average reader to fathom the meaning. I hope that in his later work he will synthesize and clarify the mass of ideas that are at present raging in his head, only let them continue to rage, and let the richly varied imaginative life of which these poems are the fruit continue to flourish; for poets like this are of immense value at the present time. They bring a flowering new life into the language, and help to silence the tiresome jingling of old and battered poetic counters, and in their poems we find no dessicated thin strain of thought, but rather bright jostling legions of ideas.

Mr. Joseph Gordon Macleod is also an experimentalist and has enough staying power to attempt a long poem. In "The Ecliptic" he uses the signs

of the Zodiac as symbols of the phases of man's consciousness through life. In his own words " Although I hope it will have significance for my time, this is not intended to be either a typical, or a unique, but merely a single consciousness ; nor to be the complete survey of a life, but merely a path through it." The scholar in him seems to predominate over the poet, for his erudition though comprehensive is too ubiquitous, and being more applied than structural, tends to overload his verse. None the less his poem is neither monotonous nor dull, and evidences enough stimulating thought to make it well repay a certain concentration on the part of the reader.

With Mr. Herbert Palmer we return to tradition. Where the previous writers are classical and objective he is romantic and extremely personal. His Muse although a fighter is curiously variable in her swordmanship ; for example, on one page we find the subtle and witty " Misunderstood " which has true lightness of touch and La Fontaine-like neatness ; and on another the over-emphatic " Blight : 1914 " which suggests a crude club rather than a delicate rapier. Lyrics which have about them a strange bitter-sweet fantasy like " Song for December " and " New Hope for Some " make verse such as " The Tramp " the more distressing in contrast, for however worthy the sentiment the manner is more allied to the Salvation Army than to satire.

But although Mr. Palmer does not always bring it off, he possesses two important qualities, vehemence and originality. His poems are all very much alive though none in the present collection seem to me as fine a poetical achievement as " The Offspring of Heaven and Hell," an allegorical poem about Ireland, which appeared in " The New Statesman " over a year ago.

" The One Unfaithfulness of Naoise " is a long blank verse poem written on the Deirdre saga. An imagination of a coloured pictorial quality is evident throughout, and many of the images show a poet's observation ; this for example of Naoise :

> " And like the shadow of a cloud he passed
> Over the bare and silent mountain ways "

and this of Deirdre :

> " As a lone blossom upon the bleak cliff's edge
> Lashed by the spray and mocked by buffeting winds
> Waits that last hour when the devouring sea
> Shall drag it down, she waited . . . . "

The atmosphere of the poem is consistently well kept up, and the reader is all the time conscious of the wild and stormy beauty of the Celtic landscape against which the tragedy moves. Many of the descriptions linger vividly in the memory. that of the maiden Nuala in the woodland :

> " White as the moonbeams, trembling as flowering grass
> The summer tempest bends."

and also King Conchubhar's frienzied drive to Deirdre's abandoned house, and finest and most dramatic of all, the pageantry of the arrival of the Sons of Usneach at Emain Macha, and their tense waiting for the grim, inevitable vengeance of the King. Her sixty-one pages of blank verse might possibly have been varied

here and there with other metres, and her vocabulary might be amplified with advantage, but these are minor points, for within its circumscribed limits the poetic talent of Moirin a Cheavasa moves nobly and delicately, and to one reader at least the starry beauty of the Deirdre legend emerged afresh.

"The Pursuit" by P. P. Graves is a narrative poem describing an incident of the Hauran rising of 1918, in the Arabian campaign, in which Colonel Lawrence played such an important part. Its interest is more local and historical than poetic, for although the Turkish soldiers and the Arabs, the camels and the desert all go to make a spirited and dramatic episode, with a boy's-adventure-story charm, the verse is on the whole rather rough and unpractised.

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## A FAMILY OF ARTISTS.

The Burnt Man. By George Manning-Sanders. Faber & Faber. 7s. 6d. net.

The Crochet Woman. By Ruth Manning-Sanders. Faber & Faber. 7s. 6d net.

The Manning-Sanders family is probably one of the most gifted families in England to-day; both Mr. and Mrs. Manning-Sanders have come to be recognised as novelists of unusual power, and their young daughter has already had the approval of the Royal Academy placed upon her painting. Here are two novels which illustrate splendidly the quality of the novelist parents.

In *The Burnt Man* George Manning-Sanders seems to depart from the method employed in his beautiful *Drum and Monkey*, but the departure is only apparent. Both novels are used to display the character of a countryside as much as that of a group of persons. In this novel Humphry Daine succeeds where Mr. Polly failed; he succeeds in destroying his business premises by fire, and in making everyone believe that he had perished in the ruin. In Cornwall, as Mr. Sanctuary, he gradually gathers to himself a new life and a new career. In his delineation of the characters of Humphry and the two girls at the house in which he finds work and lodging, as well as in the rural atmosphere of the surroundings, Mr. Manning-Sanders is masterly. *The Burnt Man* will delight all who seek a novel that is at the same time a delight to read, and a careful study of a little-known corner of England.

*The Crochet Woman*, Mrs. Manning-Sanders' new novel, is an intensive study of the evil influences of a woman believed to be a witch. As the story unfolds itself the reader perceives that her witchcraft is no more than a desire to avenge what she believes to have been a wrong inflicted upon herself. From another angle the novel is a study of the evil of gossip, and the ruin that may be inflicted upon the lives of the innocent by the idle tongue. Here again is Cornwall in all its glory, with people who are as attractive as they are unusual. It is certainly a book to read twice.

A. E. M.

DAVID GOLDER BY IRENE NEMIROVSKY. Translated by Sylvia Stuart. Constable. 6s.

A welcome for this translation from many people has been assured by the prominence given to the original by well-known critics. The quotation from Vincent O'Sullivan given on the dust-jacket, will recall to readers of the Dublin Magazine his able introduction of this book on its appearance. Miss Sylvia Stuart has rendered well the strong, compact, relentlessly earnest movement of the original. The book in English loses nothing of its very terrible blend of moral indignation, and bitter realism.

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## D. H. LAWRENCE.

THE VIRGIN AND THE GIPSY. By D. H. Lawrence. 6s. net.
D. H. LAWRENCE. By Rebecca West. London: Martin Secker. 3s. 6d. et.

These two small books both published by Mr. Martin Secker will appeal especially to those already interested in the work of Lawrence. "The Virgin and the Gipsy" is characteristically Lawrence. But it is not the full Lawrence. He was evidently resting on his oars in writing this short tale. It is full of his vitality and delicacy of perception, but his philosophy, though always present, is quiescent and never obtrudes. So that one could read the book and scarcely suspect the existence of his elaborate background of psychology. And yet the story reveals a curious mood for Lawrence. There is restraint in it, an unusual quality for him, and a little bitterness, also unusual for him. Perhaps the constraint came from decision to exclude definite reference to his ideas, and the irony from a feeling of the uselessness of trying to get people to understand them. Those in sympathetic understanding with Lawrence will welcome this little book as a signal that his indomitable flag was never lowered, and those to whom it comes as new work will surely be roused into appreciation by its stimulating attitude to life and by the amazing effectiveness of its economical parsimony of style.

Miss Rebecca West's Essay is full of profound sincerity, and though lacking a little in the elusive quality necessary to apprehend Lawrence, her appreciation of his genius invests her prose with a real touch of nobility. Lawrence can be very aggravating in his superficial aspect. Miss West's personal contact with him revealed this to her. But deep appeals to deep. And it did not take Miss West long to discover the profundity of Lawrence's insight. This is not a primer to spoon-feed beginners. It will be chiefly welcome to those to whom Lawrence already stands as an outstanding figure in English literature.

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THE COBBLER'S APPRENTICE. By Patricia Lynch. Illustrated by Mildred R. Lamb. Talbot Press. Dublin & Cork. 2s. 6d.

Let me warn everyone about to give a child an Irish fairy-book for the first time, that he is likely to be creating a demand for which the supply will be insufficient. Indeed, before ever the moment of dearth arrives, the seeker for Irish

fairy tales may require to bring to his quest a certain amount of purpose and persistency. Irish booksellers are not wont to give any pride of place to these delicate native products. Rather they treat them as the Cinderellas of their establishments, hustling them away at festive times, to lowly nooks and inconspicuous corners that the endless throng of their gaudily-apparelled and more popular sisters may have the more room to prink and parade their foreign finery. But, of course, the true hunter of fairy tales would never be satisfied with anyone but Cinderella, and so that in the end as always, those who have treated her harshly have merely enhanced her beauty and modesty!

However, even assuming that the difficulties but add to the joys of the searcher, the moment will come when it seems to him, that every child he knows possesses every one of the available fairy-books ; and when Christmas will find him scanning the book shops with as frantic an eye as that of a mother thrush seeking her fledglings' breakfast in a frosty field. Christmas by Christmas, and birthday by birthday, he has perhaps diminished the golden hoards of Standish O'Grady, of James Stephens, of Ella Young, and of the few others who have told their tales as much for children as for grown people. After this, he has delved may be amongst the treasure of the folk-lore collectors trusting that the magic within would more than neutralize the suspiciously "grown-up" exterior. And so here he is, as Christmas comes, seeking desperately for new shanachies to pacify the turbulent yearnings, the eager requests that his earlier gifts are responsible for wakening all about him.

He and many like him will welcome warmly this little book which makes a very sensible attempt to supply their need. "The Cobbler's Apprentice" is altogether a child's book. Not a fairy-tale that parents will enjoy just as much as their children. Patricia Lynch, while in no way aspiring to imaginative artistry has a quaint fancy which has the merit of being free of any instructive bias. She is evidently one of those who can respond adequately to the demand "tell us a story," and she has been able to set down her response so spontaneously, that one can easily believe she is telling it all, without plan or premeditation just as it comes into her head. She has just that gift of impromptu invention that children delight in. The Talbot Press deserves all credit for the format of the book which to the eye of childhood, will, I think, not only present the combined allure of the picture book and the story book, but will also give that impression of crisp ephemerality conveyed traditionally in the rhyme.

"Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake baker's man
Bake me a cake as fast as you can."

A volume, as it were, fresh from the oven, marked with every child's initial. The illustrations are all atwirl with adventurous and amusing possibilities ; and the print is set out in so attractively conversational-looking a manner that the minute you open the book, provided you be of fairy-tale age, you will find you have fallen into the story unawares and that there is no exit but the last page.

## POPULAR PLAYS.

Two Irish Plays. By George Shiels. London. Macmillan. 7s. 6d. net.

Sooner or later the Abbey Theatre must get beyond the vagaries of the readymade comedy, which in nine cases out of every ten is nothing more nor less than slapstick farce. The Irish dramatist seems, as a rule, to be wholly incapable of inventing or sustaining a comedy environment, and in consequence Abbey Theatre audiences laugh at very poor stuff indeed.

The author of these two plays, Mr. George Shiels, is certainly one of the most popular playwrights of the Abbey Theatre to-day, but neither of the plays in this volume represents him at his best or most popular. In both of these plays the weakness of the third act shows that he is either unwilling or incapable to face the problems that he postulates. The end of "Mountain Dew," in the theatre as in the book, is almost an insult to the intelligence of audience or reader; and "Cartney and Kevney" degenerates into sentimentality of the grossest kind.

The strength of Mr. Shiels as a playwright is in his characterisation, and to a lesser extent in his dialogue. In his earlier plays he has given the Abbey Theatre characters that are memorable in Paul Twyning and "Professor Tim." In the plays in this volume there are still characters who would impress themselves upon the memory, but there is none with the rich vitality of his earlier pair. It is doubtful if these two plays can be any more attractive in print than they were in the theatre; and they were certainly not among Mr. Shiels' popular successes there.

His dialogue is such that either reader or theatre-goer will delight to read or hear. It is rich and melodious, and is probably as authentic as any stage dialogue ever is. After a spale of the contemporary plays of the English, American, and Continental theatres the dialogue of these plays comes like a refreshing breeze. It has vitality, and it always means something. But it does not seem that the author improves in his craft.

A. E. M.

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## THE "SQUIRE" HIMSELF.

Sunday Mornings. By J. C. Squire. London. Heinemann. 6s. net.

In this volume will be found forty-one of those delightful review-essays which Mr. Squire contributes every Sunday to *The Observer*, and probably thousands of people will be thrilled to know that here may be renewed and made permanent the acquaintance of some of the essays which made occasional Sunday mornings memorable.

As Mr. Squire is one of the high-priests of English criticism, and as his opinions carry sway in thousands of homes, his power over taste in contemporary English literature is both deep and wide. A casual glance at the mere titles of the essays here collected will suggest that his own knowledge of that literature is at least as deep and as wide. He is as familiar with "The Bible," or "The Smugglers," as he is with "The English Inn" or "The Literature of Sport." His essays

on cricket are so very attractive, displaying his own experience of the game as much as his knowledge of its literature, that every lover of the game will inevitably ask for more. Only Neville Cardus could make the game more alluring.

In his estimates of current literature Mr. Squire is always just and conscientious. Whether he deals with Mr. Chesterton or Mr. Wells, with Sir William Watson or Herbert Trench his exposition is calculated to carry his readers with him. When he deals with such a rebel as D. H. Lawrence it may be doubted that his temperament will permit him to sympathise. His four essays on "Webster," "Otway," "Congreve," and "Ben Johnson" are models of their kind, displaying a knowledge of these dramatists that is somewhat rare, and coupling that knowledge with a critical technique that brings the essays into the category of excellent introductions to the works of the dramatists. "Sunday Mornings" is a volume to read and re-read—a volume to treasure.

A. E. M.

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THE CRITERION, A Quarterly Review. Edited by T. S. Eliot. October 1930. 30s. per annum.

An article entitled "The Perversity of D. H. Lawrence" by J. H. Thomas is written in the spirit of its title. For instance, Mr. Thomas interprets Lawrence's remark, "Feast with Bacchus or fast with Jesus; but never sit at table without one of the gods," as meaning "do whatever you like, provided only you have no earthly reason for doing it." This is worse than perversity. It is blindness.

"On Reading Einstein" by Charles Mauron, translated by T. S. Eliot is a delight to read. It is deep and luminous and vitally in touch with human reality. He shows us with the mature persuasion of a philosophic mind how Einstein has re-established the wavering self-confidence of the scientists. It is almost too good to be true.

"Four Poems" by Stephen Spender. Nos. II. and IV. satisfy with rhythmic intensity. The others are too clever in artifice. No. II. the best, original in effect and feeling. "The idea of order and the idea of God" translated from Julien Benda by J. F. Scanlan, is somewhat dry reading in English, probably not all due to the translator. Its fundamental proposition is "that things cannot present an ordered spectacle to the eyes of God unless God consists in a finite degree of perfection." A story "Charlotte Esmond," by H. E. Bates is lucid in its simple style, a little out of touch with the prevailing modernism of the other contents. Mr. Geoffrey Rosetti writes about "Christina Rosetti" with intimate knowledge and understanding, and in style that is simple and effective. A really remarkable study.

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"LIFE AND LETTERS." Edited by Desmond McCarthy. Monthly. 1s. net.

"Life and Letters" for November contains two articles of outstanding literary interest. Mr. Desmond MacCarthy writes about "The World of Henry James," and sums up with admirable insight and clearness this writer's excellencies and limitations. Mr. Tanko Larrin in "An Apologist of Dilettantism" deals with the work of Anatole France in a judicial spirit tempered with an unusual

degree of understanding. Mr. W. T. Lawrence is enterprising and provocative in his theories concerning "The Dumb Show in Hamlet."

Other items are "Music at Night" by Mr. Aldous Huxley and "The Odius Duke" by Mr. Michael Dugdale. Altogether the Magazine is excellent value and of very high merit for the modest sum charged. The "Editorial Notes on the Autumn Publishing Season" and "Readers' Reports" contain a concise and useful commentary on the best items in current literature.